

Ban on new prisoners likely

Jail disruption feared after officers' vote

By QUENTIN COWDRY, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

JAILS face more serious disruption with a prison officers' decision to take industrial action, six weeks after the end of the Strangeways siege.

The vote, by about five to one, is expected to mean a sharp increase in the number of prisoners being held in police cells, David Mellor, the minister responsible for prisons, said such action would put the public at an unnecessary risk.

Last night the Home Office said leaders of the Prison Officers' Association had been invited for talks and that the union had suggested the campaign would not start for a week. "We hope this time will be used for some common-sense second thoughts and that the POA will respond to repeated invitations for talks."

Groups with close contacts with prisoners, including the Howard League and the Prison Reform Trust, fear that any action could prompt more jail riots, since tensions are still running high in some prisons in the wake of the April disturbances.

Union leaders are aware that they have embarked on a high-risk strategy, but think public opinion is on their side.

They believe lack of staff was a prime cause of the riot in Manchester that led to a 25-day siege.

Mr John Bartell, the union's chairman, indicated that officers would bar new admissions at overcrowded jails and prevent "troublesome" inmates, such as those involved in the recent disorders, from being transferred. Details of the campaign are to be finalised tomorrow.

The union said: "No action is planned which would effect prisoners within the system. Our primary aim will be to prevent overcrowded establishments becoming more overcrowded and unsuitable prisoners being placed in unsuitable establishments."

For the union, barring admissions at overcrowded jails, commonly known as a "lock-out", has the advantage of partly deflecting Home Office criticism of its sanctions, even if prisoners have to be kept in police cells.

Mr Mellor said a lockout of inmates could lead to some three thousand prisoners being held in police custody. "Police cells are not as secure as prison cells, and the public would be put at unnecessary risk," he said. The action was most regrettable and would divert officers from crime-tackling duties. Nearly a thousand prisoners are in police custody because of the damage to Strangeways and local union disputes.

The Police Federation urged the government to prevent prisoners being housed in police cells. Policemen were fed up to the back teeth of acting as surrogate warders, it said. "Keeping prisoners for long-term detention in police cells is inhumane on the prisoners and their families and causes major disruption in police forces."

Frances Crook, director of the Howard League, said: "The important thing is to prevent industrial action because there will be more disturbances." Apart from rioting, there was a risk of inmates committing suicide or mutilating themselves. "Any industrial action the prison officers take hurts prisoners first, not the Home Office," Ms Crook said. She urged David Waddington, the home



Silent tribute: An Iliescu supporter sealing the lips of a soldier with a caress as the president is inaugurated

Iliescu sworn in but fear rules

From CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN BUCHAREST

ION Iliescu was inaugurated as Romanian president yesterday amid deep scepticism about his commitment to democracy and to human and minority rights.

The ceremony was overshadowed by a boycott by the United States prompted by mob violence by pro-government miners. The European Community was represented at ambassadorial level. Michael Atkinson, Britain's ambassador, however, denied any split on policy between London and Washington.

"I heard some good words spoken in the speech. But we are looking for deeds in Romania to follow up the words," Mr Atkinson said.

Opposition leaders were critical of Mr Iliescu's speech in which he justified calling in the miners because of army and police weaknesses.

"The speech was not only economic with the truth, it was a travesty of the truth," said Ion Ratu, the failed presidential candidate of the right-wing National Peasant party. "He said that the miners were brought in to restore law and order: that is not what I saw."

There was little attempt at the ceremony to disguise the renewed power of the Securitate. A row of 100 soldiers standing guard were given orders to march by a Securitate agent dressed in a crumpled suit and tasteless off-white shoes which has long been the mark of the Romanian secret police.

Inadequate discipline, page 6
Leading article, page 13



Calman

Ligachev hints that Gorbachev should go

From MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

AS COMMUNISTS from the Russian Federation voted to set up a separate Russian Communist party subordinate to the Soviet Communist party, President Gorbachev was yesterday given a foretaste of the opposition to his leadership he will face at next month's party congress.

In a fiery address to the Russian party conference, Yegor Ligachev, who is regarded as leader of a conservative faction in the Politburo and enjoys undiminished popularity among rank and file party members, accused Mr Gorbachev of taking crucial political and economic decisions without consulting the party and hinted that he should resign. "One cannot head the party, this leading force, without dedicating all one's time to it," he said.

Mr Ligachev's call reflects the widespread feeling inside and outside the party that one man should not be state president and party general secretary at the same time. But it also revealed the deep resentment of party officials that the party has not been consulted about foreign policy, including changes in the Soviet position on German reunification, or about the government's now-postponed programme for economic reform, which incorporated steep price rises.

The economic programme was compiled by the government and submitted to the Supreme Soviet. It was considered by Mr Gorbachev's presidential council but was not discussed as many had expected at a party Central Committee meeting. Mr Gorbachev's apparent preference for working through the presidential council and parliament, rather than through the party, was the subject of sharp condemnation by many speakers at the Russian party conference yesterday.

Some of the criticism clearly stung Mr Gorbachev, who was moved to intervene in the session to call for the dignity of the party and state leadership to be respected. His sensitivity on the subject has been evident since the anti-government demonstration on May Day after which a law was passed protecting the dignity of the president.

Mr Gorbachev, emphasizing that he was concerned about the office, rather than himself personally, said that even if he were not general secretary in ten or twelve days' time, the case for respecting the dignity of leaders would be no different.

At a press conference called at short notice, Yuri Prokofiev, first secretary of the

Major proposes issue of Euro currency

By RODNEY LORD AND ROBIN OAKLEY

A RADICAL plan to issue banknotes denominated in the European Currency Unit (ecu) was unveiled yesterday by John Major, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The aim is to take a practical step towards a common European currency while avoiding the inflationary dangers and surrender of sovereignty involved in the Delors plan.

The Chancellor's idea, which owes something to earlier suggestions from the British Invisible Exports Council, is to set up an institution called the European Monetary Fund (EMF), which would create an entirely new international currency. At present the Community does not issue ecu notes and the currency has no existence independent of the national currencies on which it is based.

Mr Major sees the new ecu as providing a "natural currency" for tourists and business travellers.

Colleagues believe it is an ingenious combination, signalling a more sympathetic approach from Britain while safeguarding economic sovereignty in a week in which the prime minister said that a single European currency, with the degree of sovereignty over economic policy that had to be sacrificed, was not for her political lifetime.

The Chancellor's speech had been agreed in advance with Margaret Thatcher and, significantly, with Nicholas Ridley, the trade secretary, who has been leading a counter-attack within the Cabinet against what he sees as a drive by Mr Major and Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, to push Britain into the European exchange rate mechanism (ERM).

Mr Major's plans, flagged as Britain's contribution to the debate on economic and monetary union leading to the intergovernmental conference on European Monetary Union (EMU) in December, were set out in a speech last night to the German Industry Forum.

Mr Major put forward two versions. The less ambitious would be for the new EMF to act as a currency board, only issuing ecu that were backed one for one by national currencies. His preference is for a more ambitious "hard ecu", a genuine new currency managed by the EMF through open market operations.

Saturday Review

The audited circulation of *The Times* in May was 429,794 copies, an increase of 3,463 over April. This was the biggest rise for any national quality newspaper and puts *The Times* back ahead of *The Guardian*, as well as of *The Independent*.

● The latest National Readership Survey gives the paper an increased readership over six months of 2.6 per cent, making *The Times* now the most cost-effective way for advertisers to reach the ABC1 economic groups.

● This week *The Times* new Saturday Review will appear as part of the refashioned Saturday paper, in colour and with a full range of profiles, arts, fashion, shopping and weekend features. *The Times* Saturday Review will be the best on the market. Do not miss it.

Local control call on policing cash

By QUENTIN COWDRY, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE way provincial police forces are financed encourages them to seek extra manpower whether they need it or not, the Audit Commission said yesterday in a critical report.

Calling for Whitehall officials to make an objective assessment of forces' manpower needs, the report also says police manpower and finance are too tightly controlled by central government. As a result, the traditional influence of chief constables and local authorities over policing has been eroded.

Police authorities, the report says, never fail to submit bids each year for extra officers because the grants they receive from central government more than cover the higher staff costs. In recent years, however, the Home Office had approved only half

Need, not number, page 2
Lateral thinker, page 2
Leading article, page 15

Bush rebuff to PLO

From MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Bush was expected to announce early today that he was suspending America's 18-month dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation because of its failure to condemn an abortive attack by Palestinian gunmen on a crowded Israeli beach on May 30.

For three weeks the US has pressed Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, to condemn the raid and expel Abul Abbas, whose Palestine Liberation

About-turn, page 12

Police hold 23 in worst World Cup violence

From JOHN GOODBODY IN CAGLIARI



Robson: forced by injury to miss vital Egypt game

AS THE police yesterday prohibited a march by England supporters to the stadium for the vital World Cup qualifying game against Egypt here tonight, 23 of them were detained in the port city of Olbia after fighting between England supporters and as many as 500 Italians in the city centre.

England, without Bryan Robson, their captain, must beat Egypt to ensure a place in the last 16. A draw could bring elimination depending on other results and even on the drawing of lots.

Police said the incident in Olbia was "a battle, even a war." It was probably the worst hooligan incident on the island since the World Cup began. Thirty riot police were forced to fire warning shots to separate the rival factions.

The trouble started when the local

Sardinians, celebrating Italy's victory over Czechoslovakia, began provoking a group of English supporters, some of whom had been drinking heavily. Bottles and stones were thrown. A police spokesman said: "We were able to catch the Englishmen, but most of the Sardinians escaped." One Sardinian was detained.

The England supporters will appear before a magistrate today charged with resisting arrest, causing damage, refusing to give personal details, fighting and being drunk in a public place. Their arrest brings to 151 the number of England supporters detained since the tournament began. Forty-four arrests have been confirmed.

Four of the six Englishmen held in the violence in Cagliari last Saturday have been released without charge. Mr Neil Egerton, from Liverpool, who broke a leg in that fracas, will be released from

hospital and flown home today. Mr Mark Chapman from Hemel Hempstead, has been given a six-month suspended sentence and sent home.

Not everything about the England followers is unpleasant news. Members of the Football Supporters' Association yesterday donated blood at a hospital in Cagliari to help those suffering from thalassaemia, a disease which particularly affects some Mediterranean people in their twenties.

The association, whose status as the authentic voice of the committed supporter is growing, plans to organise additional blood donations during the World Cup and has started a collection to help the centre in Sardinia which specialises in treating the disease.

Photograph, page 22
Graham Taylor, page 39
Reports, pages 38, 39 and 44

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INDEX	
Arts	18-20
Births, marriages, deaths	15
Books	17
Business	23-31
Court & Social	14
Crosswords	15, 22
Health	37
Law Report	13
Leading articles	13
Letters	14
Obituary	8
Parliament	38-44
Sport	38-44
TV & Radio	21

High Court backs synod on divorced priests law

By RUTH GLEDHILL

A HIGH Court judge yesterday rejected a legal challenge to the two senior archbishops of the Church of England over moves to allow the ordination of remarried divorcees.

Mr Justice Hoffmann dismissed a move by four members of the general synod to overturn church legislation passed in 1987. He granted the archbishops of York and Canterbury an order "striking out" the writ issued by the four, who face costs of tens of thousands of pounds.

Church lawyers had used laws dating from the time of Henry VIII and James I to clarify a constitutional point that could affect up to 240 would-be ordinands who are divorced and remarried.

The four were contesting the legislation because it was not passed by a two-thirds majority. The canon, passed by 139 votes to 65 in the house of clergy and 125 votes to 77 in the house of laity, will allow remarried divorcees and men married to divorcees to become ordained if they obtain special leave from one of the two archbishops.

The four who brought the action were Canon Roy Porter, former professor of theology at Exeter university, Margaret Brown, of Luckhurst, Mayfield, East Sussex, Michael Combs, of Bourne-mouth, and Trevor Stevenson, of Crowborough, Sussex. After the case, Mrs Brown's husband, Hubert, said consid-

eration would have to be given to costs before they decided whether to appeal. The church has given an undertaking not to seek a Royal Licence for the legislation until the legal action is resolved.

Mr Andrew McCooey, the plaintiffs' solicitor, said after the case: "This is a matter of constitutional importance. It is the thin end of the wedge with regard to what has been happening in the church. We feel that the church has let down many of its members by allowing the passing of this canon to permit the ordination of clergy who may be married to divorcees. We felt we had to take the only course open to us, to challenge by a court declaration what the church is doing."

"So many people are disillusioned with the Church of England. They think it is failing to give a moral lead in a society which we feel is looking to the church for a moral lead. Priests should have unblemished credentials. If a man goes into the priesthood, he should set high standards. This has been the understanding throughout the history of the church."

The four wanted clarification over whether the legislation was approved legally by the synod because it was not presented under the 1974 Worship and Doctrine Measure. That requires any new canon deemed to interfere with the rubrics of the church in the Book of Common Prayer to obtain a two-thirds majority in the voting. Miss Sheila Cameron, QC, for the archbishops, said that as the wording of the rubric had not been changed, a two-thirds majority was not necessary.

Dr John Habgood, Archbishop of York, ruled when sitting as a chairman of a session of the general synod in February 1987 that the canon had been passed when it gained a simple majority. Miss Cameron argued that this was legal under the clergy ordinance measure passed by the Commons this year, having been initially rejected last year.

Mr William Gage, QC, argued for the plaintiffs that impediments to ordination listed in the rubric of the Book of Common Prayer were in essence being changed by the new canon, and should therefore have required a two-thirds majority.

Miss Cameron, ex-officio vicar-general for the province of Canterbury, said: "This challenge also raises the question of the extent to which members of the synod can come to the court and seek for the court to determine whether decisions made by an archbishop in charge of a session can be challenged. Just as the court will not investigate procedural rulings within the Houses of Parliament, so the court should not investigate rulings given in the general synod."

She said the new law was not intended to be a carte blanche to anyone to come along who has been divorced.



Lena Rozova, from Leningrad, tending an injured hedgehog at the St Tiggywinkle's wildlife hospital in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, yesterday. Lena, aged 18 months, was brought to England by the British Science and Technology Trust for an operation to connect nerves in her shoulder that were dislodged at birth (Mark Souster writes).

Olga Rozova, Lena's mother, wrote to Professor Paul Cook, president of the trust, asking for help after she read about a group of Soviet children taken to Britain by the trust. The operation was performed free by David Hunt, an orthopaedic surgeon at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington, London, last week. Lena already has some feeling in her fingers and within three months should have reasonable if not full movement of her arm. The trust, which helps to promote environmental causes, is planning to finance a St Tiggywinkle's hospital in Leningrad, the first outside Britain. It will pay for a Russian vet to train in the techniques used at the hospital.

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Slaughtermen give evidence on BSE

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

SLAUGHTERMEN said yesterday that some abattoirs split open cattle skulls and remove the brains, but they said the methods used ensured there was no risk of brain tissue coming into contact with the rest of the carcass and infecting the meat with "mad cow" disease.

Members of the Association of British Meat Processors, which represents the country's biggest abattoirs, appeared before the Commons enquiry into bovine spongiform encephalopathy with officials of the National Farmers' Union, the Meat and Livestock Commission and the Institution of Environmental Health Officers. Nick Hibbert, a senior environmental health officer specialising in meat legislation, told the enquiry that his organisation was concerned about "the practice of removing, or otherwise handling, the brain of the bovine animal which we view as a potential risk to public health". The practice was "not necessary and should be expressly prohibited".

Speaking for the slaughtermen, Richard Cracknell, who runs a beef processing busi-

ness at Blisworth, in Northamptonshire, said that until six months ago no abattoirs attempted to remove brains. Tongue and cheek meat would be cut out and the cattle heads sold with brains intact for manufacture into meat and bone meal.

"Renderers paid us for the heads at £10 a tonne. The situation changed when bovine brain was declared a prohibited offal. Renderers then started charging us £80 a tonne to dispose of the heads. Some abattoirs sought to lower the charge by removing the brains so as to reduce the weight of the head. This saved about £1.30 an animal," Mr Cracknell said. He believed slaughtermen could "live with" a ban on brain removal.

Slaughtermen estimated that about 5 per cent of cattle heads were being split in the abattoir, but "the carcass is always decapitated first and the head is taken away from the slaughter line. Head meat is removed before splitting in order to extract the brain. There is no possibility of subsequent contact of the brain with the carcass or the head meat," they said.

Shoppers avoid 'scare' foods

By RICHARD EVANS, MEDIA EDITOR

MORE than a third of shoppers are abandoning beef, eggs or pâté, according to a survey published today. Many are also avoiding chilled foods, tap water and chicken, with a quarter disregarding scaries.

Food and the environment are the most politically important issues concerning the British housewife, and four out of five blame the government for food safety problems, the report says.

The survey, carried out by the advertising agency Stewart, Smith, Deighton, Cox in conjunction with Network Research, involved 525 "housewives" and six group discussions. Housewives are defined as people in charge of buying food in a home.

The agency says it has identified a "new breed of activists", who spontaneously cite food safety as a problem and adopt measures such as buying organically grown fruit. Richard Block, who commissioned the research, said these younger, more affluent women "are going to turn the food manufacturing and retail world on its head. This new breed must not only be accommodated, but actively wooed."

Blame for lack of food safety was put on manufacturers (68 per cent), chemical companies (60), food preparers, including consumers (58), and farmers (53). The government was held most to blame by a quarter of those interviewed, and half expected ministers, rather than manufacturers or farmers, to provide solutions. Asked to name food problems, 55 per cent said BSE, "mad cow disease" or beef. Eggs (20 per cent), salmonella (14) listeria (10), E numbers (8), general hygiene and tampering (7.5 each) and chilled food (5.5) were also mentioned. Seven out of ten believed they could do something about food safety, with the favourite remedy being to stop buying certain goods.



26% of the sample did not avoid any of these

Council cuts blamed for baby's death

By MICHAEL HORNSNELL

THE death of a girl aged three at the hands of her drunken father may be attributed partly to council cash cuts, an enquiry into the case alleged yesterday.

The wretched life of Stephanie Fox ended last year when her father shook her to death, partly scalping her, at the family's squalid 19th floor flat where she slept in a broken cot. Stephen Fox, aged 23, a caretaker, was jailed for life in March for the murder of the girl who had spent most of her life on the council's at-risk register.

The enquiry found a number of shortcomings in social care in the borough of Wandsworth, where the Conservatives won a landslide local election victory after setting a record low poll tax of £148 earlier this year. The enquiry, commissioned by the Wandsworth area's multi-agency child protection committee, said that finding a day nursery place for Stephanie was a crucial part of her "protection plan" and condemned the length of time it took. It also discovered that Wandsworth was operating a cash-saving scheme of filling only two in five day nursery staff posts.

The three-member enquiry panel chaired by Olive Stevenson, professor of social work studies at Nottingham University, found that social worker recruitment and the inability to fill vacancies or cover staff sickness, sometimes as a matter of policy, were linked.

Last night Joan Lester, Labour spokesman on children, said: "This is a tragic example of how a system designed to help children like little Stephanie can be sabotaged by a local authority which accords children such a low political priority and puts low poll tax rates at the top of their agenda."

Mike Rundle, social services director, admitted more than 10 children at risk in Wandsworth had no social worker allocated to them because of staff shortages, though he said councillors would not sanction any cuts in child protection. But Sue Adcock, the local Nalpo representative, said the council was seeking to cut £5 million from its social services budget to meet poll tax commitments.

Margaret Lynch, a member of the panel, said shortages of health visitors and social workers, which played a part in the case, were part of a worsening national problem caused by government-imposed cash limits.

During the trial the court was told that Stephanie had 70 injury marks on her body and a history of bruises and burns. Professor Stevenson said the tragedy was caused by a series of interlocking factors, and added: "Nothing we have seen in the report would have led us to the inescapable conclusion that it [Stephanie's death] could have been predicted."

The enquiry found that 30 incidents of bruising were recorded in Stephanie's short life but they were detailed in different files. The enquiry recommended that all injuries to children at risk should be recorded on one chart. Communication and co-operation between social workers, health visitors, medical and nursery

staff involved in Stephanie's case was not always good, the enquiry reported.

Staff shortages led to a gap in protection for Stephanie at a critical period when her parents' relationship was breaking up four months before her death, the enquiry found. The family's experienced social worker left, it took time for the case to be transferred, the health visitor fell ill, and warnings from the day nursery did not get through.

"The issue of the handover of the case was clearly critical. We find it unacceptable that staffing levels should be such that there should be a lengthy delay in finding the new worker and handing over."

The British Association of Social Workers said: "This review has shown very clearly that social workers must be given the tools to do the job."

Last night, Elizabeth Howlett, chairman of social services, denied a paper had gone to the social services department recommending £5 million cuts, and pledged no services would be cut in Wandsworth. The council announced plans to set up a borough-wide team of child protection specialists.

She added that where procedures needed tightening and communication strengthening they would be given the highest priority.

Woman hurt in bomb attack

A WOMAN was injured yesterday by one of two parcel bombs sent to English-owned businesses in north Wales. Meibion Glyndwr (The Sons of Glyndwr) claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The woman suffered injuries to her hand when she opened the parcel at the Land and Marine shop in Aberystwyth, Gwynedd. It is believed to be the first time anyone has been injured during the campaign by Welsh extremists.

In the second attack an identical package stencilled and marked private was sent to the proprietors of an English-owned restaurant in Dolgellau, Gwynedd. However, staff became suspicious and took the parcel to the police who recognised the writing as the work of Welsh activists.

Jonathan Saddington, the restaurant owner, said: "Normally anything marked private would have been put under the counter and it may have lain there for a couple of days. Goodness knows what could have happened. These fanatics who carry on like this are not doing the Welsh any good at all."

An English holiday home on Forestry Commission land near Dolgellau was severely damaged by fire at the weekend but police are still not sure if it was the work of extremists. The campaign against English-owned homes and businesses has been going on for more than 10 years.

Yachtsmen saved by RAF

TWO yachtsmen were winched to safety by an RAF helicopter yesterday as their boat sank during a race across the Atlantic. A helicopter crew flew from Brawdy, Dyfed, to the crippled yacht Sprint, 240 miles southwest of Bantry Bay, Ireland.

John Blawn and Simon Chance were trying to keep their boat afloat during a gale after its keel and rudder were damaged. They were bailing out until the Sea King helicopter winched them to safety.

The pair, who had been competing in a transatlantic yacht race, were flown back to Ireland. "It was a race against time to save the yachtsmen," an RAF spokesman said.

Margaret Thatcher found herself caught up in a coastal rescue operation yesterday when the life-saving demonstration she was attending became a rescue off the coast of Cornwall.

Mrs Thatcher had just watched an air-sea rescue exercise on board the lifeboat Faithful Forester when the Fowey harbourmaster had to dispatch the vessel to rescue a sinking yacht.

The lifeboat delivered a salvage pump to the stricken yacht Slipshod, which was taking in water half a mile off the harbour entrance. None of the crew recognised the prime minister, who was wearing a life jacket and head scarf.

The incident served to highlight a national coastal safety campaign, with the aim of reducing the thousands of accidents in British coastal waters each year, unveiled yesterday by Cecil Parkinson, the transport secretary.



John Blawn and Simon Chance after an RAF helicopter winched them off their sinking yacht

Man in death pact 'took wrong pills'

A BOGUS SAS colonel duped his family, Mrs Sheldon, and her husband, David Sheldon, into believing he had been an SAS officer.

When the charade was in danger of being exposed, Osborne took Mrs Sheldon to a motel in South Witham, Lincolnshire, where they agreed to die together. Michael Hubbard, QC, for the prosecution, said. Both took overdoses but Osborne recovered in hospital.

Yesterday, Police Constable Gerard Foley told the court of a conversation he had with Osborne at Grantham police station five days after his arrest in September last year. Osborne allegedly told him: "I remember taking a lot of drugs and Helen coming into the hotel room."

"The drugs I took were the wrong ones. I expected to die then, but they weren't strong enough. I thought 'bloody hell', I'm still alive after taking all those drugs. Helen came in and said she wouldn't let me overdose myself. If I went, she wanted to be with me and we should go together."

"She was so besotted by me and said she didn't want to live without me. So we decided to go together, but the poor darling is dead and I'm alive. I feel really guilty about it. I feel it is all my fault."

Osborne allegedly told the officer that Mrs Sheldon used drugs that she had confiscated from him the previous day. The trial continues.

Art pays off for pension fund

By JOHN SHAW

A £1.3 MILLION investment in Victorian paintings 15 years ago brought a £5.6 million return for British Rail employees in a sale of 19th-century pictures and drawings at Sotheby's in London.

Maurice Stonefrost, chief executive of the BR pension fund, said: "The pensioners should feel quite confident after this. It represents a good return in cash and real terms."

The fund made a £40 million investment in a variety of works of art in the late 1970s but has sold more than 60% of its acquisitions recently. The

35 Victorian paintings made £5.61 million, £6.17 million with premium, in a sale that totalled £10.2 million.

Mr Stonefrost said: "The reason we have been disposing of quite a lot of things in the last two or three years is simply that the market in these areas has been good."

Ten pictures were unsold, but Simon Taylor, a picture expert at Sotheby's, said the firm expected to sell several privately. The sale was 25% unsold, largely accounted for by a Jacques-Louis David from another owner with-

drawn at £950,000 (estimate £1.5m-£2m).

Two pictures show how shrewd the British Rail investment was; a pair of Albert Joseph Moore portrait studies entitled *The Reader and End of the Story* were bought for under £8,000 at Sotheby's in New York in June 1975, but were sold for £245,000 on Tuesday.

Dante in Exile, by Frederic Lord Leighton, the star of the fund's collection, made £1,100,000, a record for the artist, going to an unnamed private English buyer.

Regiments' fate will not be known before end of year

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE army's 75 regiments might have to wait until the end of the year or even later before they learn which of them are to be disbanded or amalgamated, it emerged yesterday.

Although there was relief among army officers that the government's options for change would not destroy the regimental system, the warning that some regiments would have to go and others merged caused much speculation.

Defence ministry sources emphasised that no decisions had yet been taken. Ministers were aware, however, that it was important not to delay announcements too long because of the risk of undermining morale, the sources said.

The 16 armoured and 34 infantry regiments are expected to be the main focus of any changes. The future of the Brigade of Gurkhas is also being examined in the options-for-change review. Of the 75 regiments, two will be excluded from the study, the SAS and the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Seven of the tank regiments are equipped with the old Chieftain tank, which is to be replaced by a limited number of either the British Challenger 2, the American M102 Abrams or the West German Leopard 2. There would be considerable resistance from those regiments if they were to be chosen first for disbandment. The regiments include The 1st Royal Tank Regiment, The 4th Royal Tank

Regiment, The Royal Hussars and The 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards.

Yesterday Mr Allan Rogers, an opposition defence spokesman, said that Labour also believed in the regimental system. "It's important because it helps recruits and trained soldiers to identify with their localities and with the traditions of their regiments," he said.

At the height of British imperial power, the army had 31 regiments of regular cavalry and 113 of infantry. Over the years, however, some of the most famous titles, such as the Highland Light Infantry, have gone.

In 1881, there were sweeping reforms imposed on the regimental system by Edward Cardwell, under which pairs of infantry regiments were amalgamated to form single, two-battalion regiments, each with a county designation.

Some of the regiments already amalgamated include: The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and The Royal Dragoons), the Royal Hussars (10th Royal Hussars and the 11th Hussars), and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, The Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers, The Royal Fusiliers and The Lancashire Fusiliers).

One of the infantry regiments which has never been amalgamated is The Green Howards, which traces its origin to independent companies raised in November

1688. The largest amalgamation of any unit in the British army is The Queen's Regiment. The regiment was formed on December 31 1966 by the amalgamation of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, the Queen's Own Buffs, the Royal Kent Regiment, The Royal Sussex Regiment and the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own).

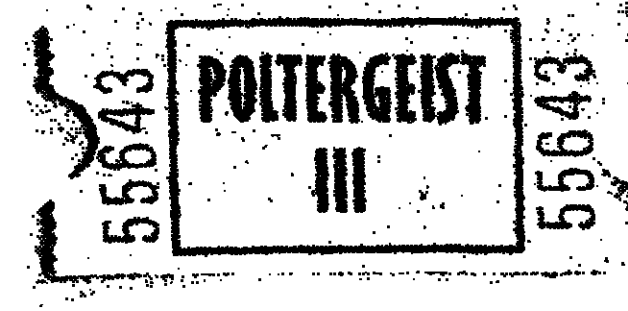
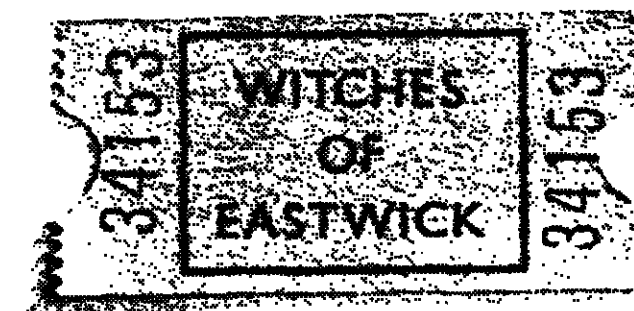
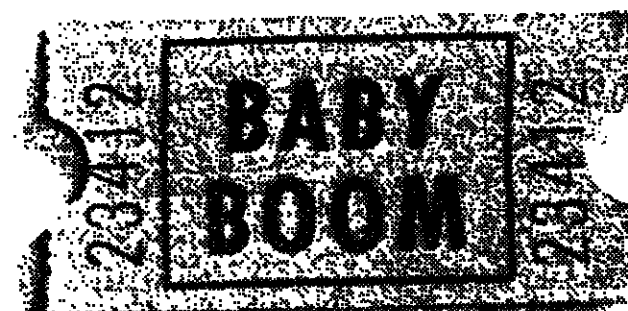
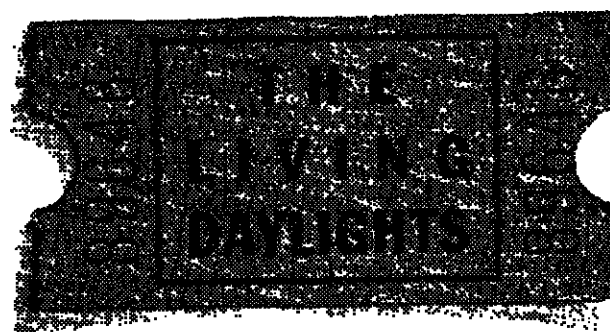
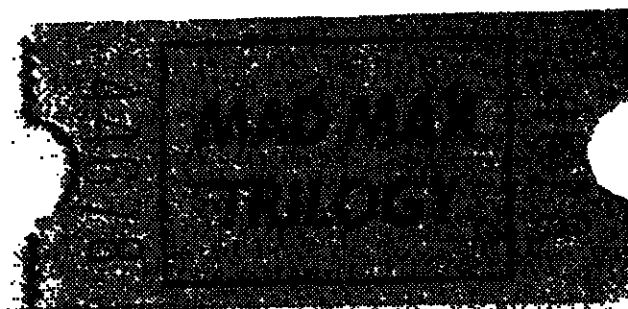
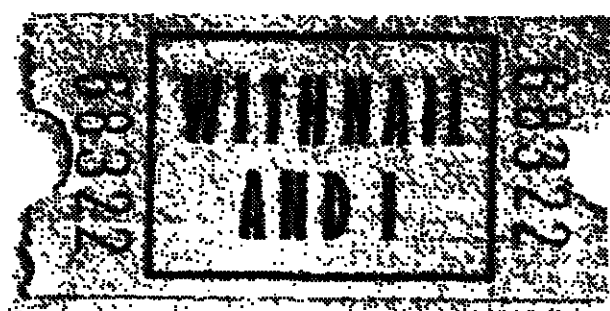
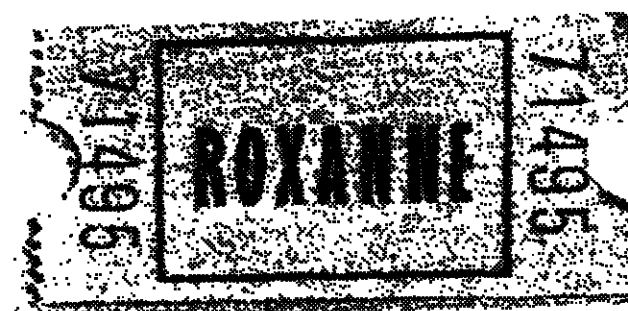
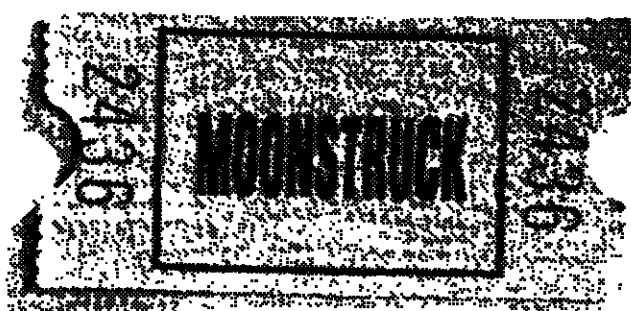
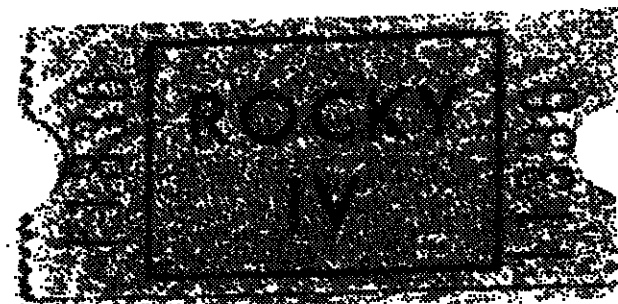
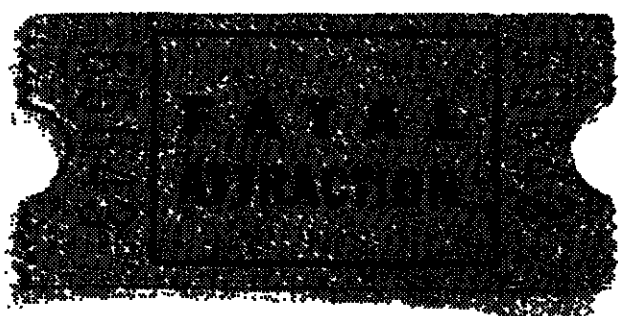
However, those four were themselves the result of four previous amalgamations dating from 1959. Today's regiment consists of 10 foot regiments, which existed before the Cardwell reforms of 1881.

The warning of cuts in army regiments was given by Archie Hamilton, the minister of state for the armed forces, in the Commons on Tuesday. Defence experts yesterday suggested other options, such as reducing the number of battalions within regiments.

Andrew Duncan, of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said: "Some of the infantry regiments have three battalions. Perhaps some of these battalions could go while maintaining the regimental tradition."

Colonel Duncan said that if ministers decided the axe had to fall on individual regiments, recruitment performance could be the key to deciding which ones should go. "The most sensible means of selection would be to look at the long-term recruitment records and retain those which have the best records," he said.

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Parkinson explains case for postponing rail link proposals

The government's announcement that it was to postpone the Channel tunnel high-speed rail link provoked a barrage of criticism. Cecil Parkinson, the transport secretary, defended the decision in an interview with Michael Dynes, our Transport Correspondent

Why did the government reject £2.6 billion of private capital for the Channel tunnel rail link? The consortium thought they could come up with a viable scheme and failed. From a viable project with no government money it became a project needing nearly £2 billion of taxpayers' money, leaving the risk of cost overruns with the public sector. What was put to me was a very different proposition from the one they set out to work up.

Are you not confusing subsidy with investment? No. We were prepared to approve up to £500 million in investment. But the consortium wanted a £500 million capital grant, £400 from Network South

East, and the £1 billion we are spending upgrading the existing line converted into a loan. That £1 billion is going to generate a lot of revenue, and the consortium wanted to use it to finance the project.

Why did the Treasury agree to the Jubilee Line extension, and a new Underground line, and refuse to agree to the link? The rail link is different from Underground lines. They are evaluated almost exclusively on a cost benefit basis - reduction of congestion, safety, comfort. The rail link was on the understanding it would not be subsidized.

We did take cost benefit into account, but we felt the benefits to Network

SouthEast did not justify the money requested.

What is your response to critics who argue postponement of the project has left Britain trailing behind its continental counterparts? Frankly, I'm surprised by the sheer misinformation about this project. Members of the CBI said it was a blow to hopes of high-speed freight through the tunnel. This was about a fast passenger link from London to Folkestone. Arrangements for freight are already in hand, and are totally unaffected by my statement last Thursday. If you take passenger services, there was also misunderstanding about coming from France in a super train, arriving in London, and getting on a tram. People seem to be unaware there will be a common pool of trains running in all three countries.

When will we know how British Rail proposes routing the inter-capital trains into King's Cross from the North Downs?

That is now a task for British Rail. I have confirmed the line up to the North Downs, and said we will be protecting it. The compensation scheme for the original proposal through to King's Cross will stay in place. King's Cross will be the main second terminal. So we actually confirmed much more than we cancelled.

Will Britain have a high-speed rail link this century? We are all agreed there is a need for more passenger capacity in the southeast. I turned down a specific project which sought a 12.5 per cent real return for the private sector, and left very little return for the public money.

By the turn of the century we will need more capacity, and that is what BR is now working on.

Will the regions be excluded from the benefits of the Channel tunnel because of an absence of adequate transport infrastructure? The link and freight are separate issues. There has never been any possibil-

ity of freight trains running at TGV speeds. We have already ordered new freight trains, there is sufficient capacity to get freight to the tunnel, and these trains will be running at comparable speeds with those on the Continent. We are making arrangements to have modern freight trains serving the tunnel from a range of depots throughout the country. Freight arrangements are quite unaffected by my statement.

Why are proposals for a rail link via Stratford not considered viable alternatives to BR's preferred route? That is being looked at again. But these proposals have never been argued for in terms of needing less subsidy or less finance. Some people say they could be paid for out of development gains. But recovering an investment of several billion pounds would mean a hell of a lot of development in the southeast, and that wouldn't be wholly acceptable.



Parkinson at the launch of a coastal safety campaign yesterday

MPs attack inexcusable delays in immigration

By RICHARD FORD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Home Office immigration department is accused of "incompetence" and "inexcusable inefficiency" in a report by MPs cataloguing delays, staff shortages and the lack of computerisation in immigration procedures.

The report, published yesterday, demands government action including the possibility of refusing aircraft landing rights to recap £8.3 million owed by 144 carriers who are liable for the costs of detaining and returning a passenger without a right of entry.

The MPs on the home affairs committee criticise the department for failing to provide an adequate service and says this creates the "unreasonable suspicion" that civil servants use red tape as a method of immigration control. They say: "The effectiveness and fairness with which the immigration and nationality department (IND) performs its work affects both the maintenance of good race relations within the United Kingdom and Britain's standing in the world."

The committee condemns the 27-month average wait for

naturalisation as indefensible and contrasts the department's effort with those applications passed to the police, which are dealt with in 28 days. The MPs say that unless the department achieves a reasonable level of service it may consider whether compensation arrangements are necessary.

The department is urged to keep all applicants for British citizenship informed about the likely completion date of their case by sending them information every six months showing how far their application has progressed.

Home Office officials told the committee that they aimed to reduce the average waiting time for decisions on applications to 11 months by April next year, but the report expresses reservations about this ambition. It says that the target is based on workload forecasts that "have proved hopelessly inaccurate in the past". The MPs demand that the government sets targets for registration and naturalisation for the next three years.

The MPs also say that the extra staff needed to register British citizens in Hong Kong should not lead to a cut in the numbers processing applications within the department. They call for the Home Office to lift its freeze on staff recruitment, which has been in force since September 1989, and improve training.

They describe as a "deplorable state of affairs" the failure of computerisation within the department and express amazement that only one word processor is in use in the immigration appellate authority. "The tale of computerisation of immigration and nationality work is a sorry one," they believe that insufficient priority has been given to computerisation over a number of years in the IND as elsewhere in the Home Office, the MPs say.

After Labour MPs called for the report's recommendations to be implemented swiftly, David Waddington, the home secretary, blamed the delays in dealing with citizenship applications on the large influx of cases at the end of 1987, caused by changes in the regulations.

Peter Lloyd, the Home Office minister with responsibility for immigration, said it was "off beam" to describe the delays as hardship. "It may be irritating. It may be annoying, but if it does produce difficulties we are always willing to bring these out and give them priority."

Roy Hattersley, the shadow home secretary, said the report drew long overdue attention to the "scandalous way" in which the government implemented immigration laws and used excessive bureaucratic delays as a form of immigration control.

Home Affairs Select Committee report on Administrative Delays in the Immigration and Nationality Department (Stationery Office, £10.25)



Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, receiving an award from Chrissie Maher, director of the Plain English Campaign, yesterday for an advice leaflet given to debtors in county courts. The leaflet, *What do I do?*, was produced by staff of the Lord Chancellor's Department and graphic designers from the Stationery Office

Maintenance move no good, say solicitors

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

MOVES to empower courts to make orders docking absent fathers' pay to ensure that they support their families were dismissed as inadequate by the Law Society yesterday.

The government was simply stating what could be done already, the solicitors' society said. The proposals would not help the substantial number of women whose former husbands were unemployed or self-employed. "If this is all the government can think of, it is not going to improve the situation very much."

In an exceptional sideswipe at the government, the society, which represents 60,000 members of the legal profession, notes that as there appeared to be "a distinct lack of willingness on the part of the Home Office press office" to supply the Law Society with its press release on the proposals, the society could not comment on the day these were announced.

Under present powers, an attachment of earnings order is usually made only when someone paying maintenance has failed to do so. It is now suggested that such orders be made when the divorce is sealed. "This is not

going to help a substantial number of women whose ex-husbands are either self-employed or unemployed, and for the government to say that in such circumstances the court should be able to order payments to be made direct to a bank or building society by standing order is simply to state what can be done already," the society says.

The society's family law committee says much more needs to be done to improve arrangements for maintenance and capital provision after divorce. The committee endorses the government's view that fathers should not renege on their responsibility to maintain their children, but says one of the biggest problems is assessing how much maintenance should be paid. "Further problems lie in deciding where children should live and who should pay for that accommodation. The existing law makes it difficult for parties to a divorce, and their lawyers, to know how to divide family property and how to calculate the maintenance."

The committee is examining ways to improve the law. One suggestion likely to be put forward in the autumn is that maintenance for children should be calculated according to a set formula, as in Australia. There, payments are collected automatically from wages by the tax office and passed on by a social security department.

"Although it is rumoured that the government is thinking along similar lines, it is disappointing that there is no reference to the assessment of child maintenance in John Patten's statement," the Law Society says. "This would not only make it easier for divorcing couples to know what their financial situation is likely to be, but it would also emphasise the importance of providing proper maintenance for children."

The society plans to propose a number of refinements to that scheme to ensure it meets the needs of couples in England and Wales. John Appleby, committee chairman, said: "It is to be hoped that the government will be willing to introduce more comprehensive reforms."

Muslim group to set up assembly

By JAMIE DETTMER

A PRO-IRANIAN British Muslim group which has been behind much of the agitation against the novel *The Satanic Verses* said yesterday it intends to set up an Islamic "parliament" to help to unite British Islamic opinion and to encourage Muslims in Britain to resist assimilation.

The parliament would be part of a network of organisations, including an Islamic law commission, designed to secure for British Muslims the right to practise their religion and to protect it from blasphemy, the right to *halal* food and the right to "dress in the proper Islamic manner". A Muslim education commission to monitor the national curriculum is envisaged.

Plans for the Islamic parliament, an assembly of invited "representative Muslims, are contained in *The Muslim Manifesto* - a strategy for survival published yesterday by the Muslim Institute, a pro-Iranian organisation. The institute's leaders, including Kalim Siddiqui, its director, support the *fatwa* issued by the late Ayatollah Khomeini against the writer Salman Rushdie. The edict demanded Mr Rushdie's death for alleged blasphemies in *The Satanic Verses*.

The manifesto calls on British Muslims to observe British law if such obedience does not conflict with their commitment to Islam and the *ummah* (world Muslim opinion). Some observers of the Muslim political scene see it as a move in the contest between pro-Iranian and pro-Saudi groups.

Private coal mines 'lax on pit safety'

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL REPORTER

DEATHS and serious injuries to miners are rising as the government boosts the number of private pits and British Coal comes under increasing pressure to compete with foreign mines, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said yesterday.

Peter Heathfield, the NUM secretary, said the average risk of death in private mines over the past four years was one in 800, the same as in 1900, compared with one in 6,018 in British Coal pits. There were 18 deaths in British Coal pits last year, the same as the year before. However, the union said that a smaller workforce meant that the ratio was higher.

Mr Heathfield told members of the the Commons energy committee: "If you go down a private mine you will find conditions similar to those that prevailed in pre-nationalisation days. Inspections are fewer and there appears to be a very lax attitude to safety standards."

Many private pit owners had bought up obsolete equip-



Heathfield: opposed private coal mines

The Britain record compared well with underground fatalities among workers in foreign mines, particularly in South Africa and the United States. However, the NUM told MPs that British Coal's good record up to 1988 had now been reversed.

The union said: "The fact that this reversal coincides with a widely recognised demoralisation in the industry, faced with tremendous uncertainties in markets, the future of individual collieries and the government's commitment to privatise, is of even greater concern."

British Coal reported 428 major injuries last year. The union said, however, that the figures did not include the increasing number of workers not on colliery books.

Peter McNestry, general secretary of the pit deputies' union Nacods, said that there was now an average of one fatality per pit, double the number in 1982.

Register urged of women at risk

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

THE Government is to seek to counter the growing epidemic of domestic violence in Britain by urging police forces to maintain registers of women at risk in the same way that local authority social services departments keep registers of children at risk.

The Home Office is expected to issue guidelines next month laying down standards for the monitoring of domestic violence. The move follows the development of 28 domestic violence units in the Metropolitan Police area and of similar units in West Yorkshire.

The police will be encouraged to log instances when complaints are made about possible wife-beating cases and to be prepared to

send out teams including women officers, doctors and social workers when there is evidence of women being regularly attacked. Studies conducted for the ministerial group on women's issues, chaired by John Patten, the Home Office minister of state, suggest that attacks tend to become both more violent and more frequent and spread to other members of the family. Ministers want to see intervention at an early stage to minimise the danger of serious injuries.

Research shows that wife-battering is a problem affecting all sections of society and that civil remedies do not always operate effectively. It said there was a need for efforts by social services.

Saunders told to have a rest

The Guinness trial did not sit yesterday, the second time in less than a week, because of health problems affecting Ernest Saunders (Paul Wilkinson writes).

On what would have been his tenth day in the witness box at Southwark Crown Court, the former chairman of Guinness complained of difficulties with his sinuses.

He was released for examination at Guy's hospital. A consultant recommended that Mr Saunders should rest and the judge agreed to adjourn the hearing until Monday.

Mr Saunders, Gerald Ranson, head of the Heron International Group, Anthony Parnes, a City stockbroker, and the millionaire financier Sir Jack Lyons all deny theft, false accounting and breaches of the Companies Act.

Women-only bus
A women-only bus service, for those who are afraid to go out at night, is to be launched in Brighton, East Sussex, with the help of a grant from the town's Labour-controlled council.

Canoe death

A canoeist taking part in an off-shore race died after dragging his boat on to a beach and collapsing. The 36-year-old man, who has not been named, was taking part in a race with the Ringwood canoeing club off Mudeford, Dorset.

Freedom of city

The brothers Sir Richard and Sir David Attenborough will tomorrow be awarded the freedom of the city by Leicester, their birthplace, in recognition of the contribution they have made to humanity through their work.

Road rebuild

The Welsh Office yesterday said £1.5 million is to be spent on rebuilding more than two miles of dual carriageway on the A55 Bangor by-pass, which opened seven years ago.

Badger fears

Police in West Sussex fear badger baiting is on the increase along the South Downs after three dead animals were discovered. They were found in woods near Storrington by a woman out walking.

Pensioner dies

Joan Sharpe, aged 64, a pensioner, died after a fire at her home in Morley, Leeds, West Yorkshire, yesterday. No one else was in the house.

Road checks halt solstice invasion

By LIN JENKINS

POLICE road checks succeeded yesterday in keeping the collection of druids, hippies and new-age travellers from Stonehenge, the destination of their annual summer solstice pilgrimage.

Despite promises from a band of 300 travellers camped 10 miles from the monument that they would venture to the stones under the cover of darkness, police were confident they could avoid a mid-summer's day invasion.

The mood was one of co-operation on both sides, unlike previous years. Where the brightly coloured ageing vehicles of the travellers were parked down a grassy track at Grateley, a solitary police van kept guard at the entrance. Inside, the policemen played cards.

Travellers emerged into the rain from their tents and vans and decided that it was up to each individual to make their own way to the stones for sunrise. But at

10am today they plan to make a group assault, marching naked from their camp to the monument.

Willie X, self-styled leader of the group, said: "Whatever happens I'm going all the way and taking my clothes off and running naked around the stones at Stonehenge."

The hippies invited Steve Andrews, of English Heritage, which runs the site, to visit their camp and discuss whether any arrangements could be made for the group to celebrate at the stones at 4.32pm today, a time they claim is more astronomically significant than the sunrise.

Last night no decisions had been made. Police stopped groups of travellers from going near the monument and anybody planning yesterday to pay their money and visit as normal were turned away if they looked a little too like the travellers. Two girls aged 16 from Liverpool, who claimed they were

merely on holiday, were turned back by police, possibly because they were carrying rucksacks. More respectable looking people in cars were allowed in. One girl at the camp, who is a traveller only in the summer months, said: "This year the whole thing is a protest against the law. The exclusion zone means that processions cannot get within four miles of the stones, but they define procession as one person or more. It is a very important time for us to be at the stones because of the power they generate. This is about freedom to worship."

Hilary Jones, from the Travellers Aid Trust charity, which was set up to safeguard the interests of those living on the road, said the police had promised not to force a confrontation by blocking the narrow lane which leads from their temporary camp site. But as more vehicles arrived it looked unlikely that they could move en masse anywhere other than where directed by the police.

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Lambwool Serape	£79.50	£49.50
Tartan Reversible Skirts	£89.50	£39.50

FOR MEN

	Reduced From	Sale Price
Cashmere Classic Knitwear	£230.00	£130.00
Lambwool Classic Knitwear	£49.00	£27.50
Sports Knitwear	£49.50	£25.00
Cashmere Scarves	£65.00	£35.00
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By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

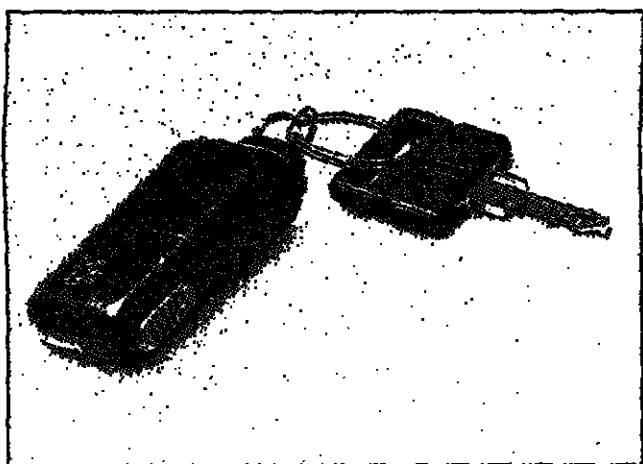
Ms Foster said that, because of the general lack of child care facilities, the gap between men's and women's earnings, far from narrowing, was getting wider. Lack of facilities, she said, meant women were caught in the net of part-time, low-paid, low-status work.

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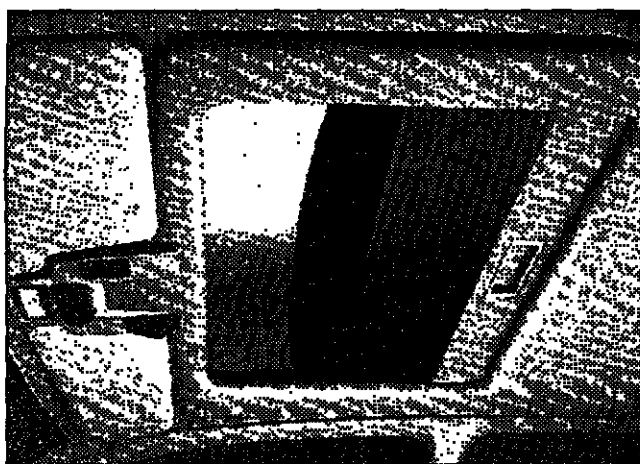
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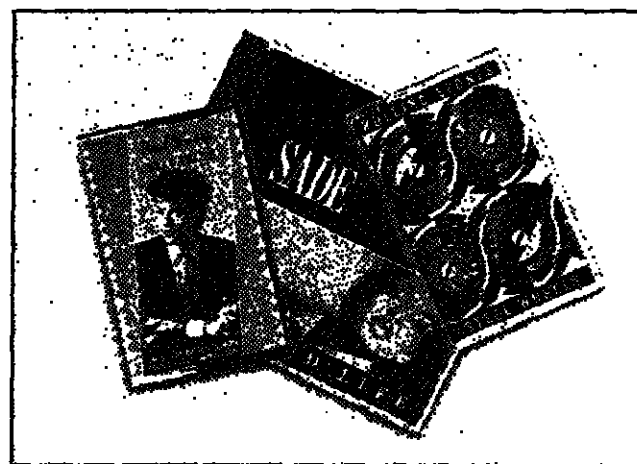
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West is drawing battle lines on aid to Gorbachev

By MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND GEORGE BROOK

CONDITIONS for financial aid to the Soviet Union now seem likely to be the subject of a battle at the world economic summit in Houston, Texas, in two weeks' time.

The British and American governments are wary and critical of suggestions from the French and German governments that the West should provide extensive financial aid to Moscow to strengthen President Gorbachev's position. The Paris-Bonn idea will be aired at next week's European Community summit as well as at Houston.

According to well-placed Washington sources, the Bush administration is now reluctantly prepared to consider US participation in an aid package. Only a few months ago any such suggestion would have been firmly ruled out. Speculation over the size of the package mentions a sum of \$20 billion (£11.6 billion).

No formal Soviet request for assistance has been received by any Western government or institution. An informal message is thought most likely to have been passed to Bonn.

The summit arguments will turn on the question of the conditions to be attached to

any aid to Moscow. Washington continues to share London's firm opposition to direct financial aid of a general and unspecified kind, arguing that giving such assistance to an unreconstructed centralised economy would be pointless, merely postponing the painful reforms necessary.

Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, warned the rest of the Community's foreign ministers last Monday against an aid scheme which repeated the mistakes of Western lending to East European economies in the 1970s. The Soviet Union, he said, was a country rich in resources but with an economy run with unique incompetence.

Most of his colleagues at the foreign ministers' council meeting, however, generally favoured the idea, which was raised by Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, who pointed out that it would be the main item on the agenda at Houston. If a package is agreed, Washington wants to be in a position to exert control over its nature and conditions.

Helmut Kohl, the West German chancellor, wrote to the US, Japan, Canada and the other community govern-

ments last Monday asking that economic and financial co-operation with the Soviet Union be discussed at the two summits.

President Mitterrand of France, in an interview in *Le Monde* the next day, called for urgent economic aid for Mr Gorbachev, warning that if his reforms failed "the rise of nationalism threatening the implosion of the Soviet Union will set off a cycle of confrontation and violence which will have grave international repercussions".

American and British officials share Mitterrand's deep concern about the repercussions of Soviet economic collapse, which could undermine Mr Gorbachev, his entire programme of reforms, and the new democracies of Eastern Europe.

They are suspicious, however, of what one described as the vague and grandiose schemes put forward by the French and Germans. Mr Mitterrand spoke of financial, commercial and technical aid for the Soviet Union but gave no precise details of what this might entail. The issue is complicated by the related question of probable German contributions to the cost of the residual Soviet garrison in East Germany.

Washington and London would want financial aid earmarked for specific approved projects. They would want to know under whose auspices it would be channelled to the Soviet Union. Above all, they would want it tied to guarantees of genuine reforms leading to a market economy. The Americans might also insist on an end to Soviet aid to traditional communist allies such as Cuba and a further easing of the economic embargo against Lithuania.

One senior British source said yesterday that, as the Soviet Union was not a member of the International Monetary Fund, some way would have to be found to reproduce the tough criteria which the fund applies to its financial rescues. Only with such guarantees could the administration already suffering a cash shortage, sell the idea of aid to the Soviet Union to Americans. Only a few months ago, the administration publicly ridiculed Richard Gephardt, the Democratic leader of the House of Representatives, for proposing economic aid for Moscow.

Officials here say the issue is beginning to generate significant behind-the-scenes diplomatic activity. An unspoken British fear would appear to be that, in its desire to win Soviet acceptance for a united Germany in Nato, Washington will agree to less rigid conditions for aid than London wants. The most the US and Britain have so far been prepared to offer is technical assistance and economic expertise.

US officials stress that President Bush has yet to decide whether the US will participate in a rescue effort, and they doubt that any firm plan will be adopted at the Houston summit. More likely, it will instruct officials to prepare a detailed plan for endorsement later.

● **SOFIA:** Bulgaria wants to postpone payments of principal on its \$10.3 billion foreign debt until 1993 but will continue to pay interest. Andrei Lukanov, the prime minister, said yesterday. He told journalists that a delegation headed by Veselin Rankov, president of Bulgaria's Foreign Trade Bank, was visiting London to discuss the rescheduling of the debt with a consortium of foreign banks. Bulgaria's foreign debt was accumulated under Todor Zhivkov, the deposed former leader.

Mr Lukanov denied reports that he would travel to London and Paris this week to renegotiate a refinancing package with creditor banks. In March his government froze its repayment of principal on foreign debt, a move which frightened foreign investors.

tion was passed by a majority after "sharp debate". Some deputies wanted to postpone the matter until after a new union treaty was signed with Moscow. With the declaration, Uzbekistan, scene of repeated outbreaks of ethnic violence in the past year, joined the three Baltic republics and Russia in declaring its laws above those of Moscow.

Lithuania has gone the farthest, announcing on March 11 that it was no longer part of the Soviet Union. Its sister Baltic republics, Latvia and Estonia, have declared in favour of a transition to independence.

The parliament in the southern republic of Georgia also defied the Kremlin yesterday by approving a declaration recognising the Baltic republics' right of self-determination. It expressed Georgia's readiness to establish direct economic and political ties with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, a spokesman for the Georgian news agency, Gruzinform, said. Moscow has imposed an economic blockade against Lithuania.

It reported that the declara-



Pointing the way: Mr Iliescu, among crowds of supporters, acknowledging their cheers after his inauguration as president of Romania in Bucharest yesterday

Berlin spy chief accuses Bonn of bribing Stasi

FROM IAN MURRAY IN BONN

RIGHT to the end of his country's separate identity, Markus Wolf, the veteran East German spy master, is doing his best to embarrass and undermine the West German establishment. He has capitalised on his notoriety to become a popular television personality, defending to the last the successful spy rings he ran, including plotting agents in the upper echelons of the West German government.

On Tuesday evening he stirred a controversy with an interview in which he claimed that the West German secret service had offered him indemnity from prosecution if he told all he knew. He also said that it had been bribing former Stasi secret agents with seven-figure sums.

Herr Wolf made much of the recent arrests of eight terrorist suspects of the Red Army Faction, hinting that this could only have been achieved with the help of Stasi agents who had been bought.

Lothar de Maizière, the East German prime minister, has meanwhile refused to accept that West Germany has the exclusive right to try and punish either the suspects or East Germans like Herr Wolf and Erich Honecker, the former head of state.

"We are still two sovereign states," he said defiantly in an

interview published today in *Bild*. Herr Wolf's allegations were hotly denied yesterday by both Hans Klein, the government spokesman, and by an anonymous counter-intelligence spokesman in Cologne.

Herr Klein, fresh from a cabinet meeting where the Wolf allegation had been discussed, was outraged at this attempt to put "the work of the democratically controlled federal investigation agency on the same level as the criminal activities of the Stasi-repression apparatus". The spokesman in Cologne accused Herr Wolf of trying to create a smokescreen to hide his possible personal involvement in providing a cover for the suspected terrorists.

He said that no offer had ever been made, and added that if Stasi agents revealed their identities and confessed, they might escape with lighter sentences.

There is no doubt that West German investigators have been able to identify and trace at least some of those on their wanted list with the help of the Stasi. Peter-Michael Diestel, the East German interior minister, has already revealed that the two latest Red Army suspects to be caught, Henning Beer and Frau Silke Maier-Witt, were both apprehended after a tip-off from a former senior agent in the Stasi's "Section 22" which dealt with terrorist offences.

The discovery of a large number of "moles" working in West Germany since the Berlin Wall opened last November is also due to information offered by former agents.

The question of who has the right to try the suspected Red Army terrorists is quickly turning into a legal minefield. All eight arrested so far have East German citizenship and under the existing constitution they cannot be handed over to a foreign power. Technically, extradition from the East to the West is not legally possible since West Germany has never acknowledged the existence of a separate German state.

If they are tried in East Germany, the eight could also have access to comprehensive Stasi files to contradict West German evidence linking them with crimes committed since they moved to East Germany. These show that in some cases they were in East Germany when they were suspected of being involved in crimes in West Germany.

If Herr Diestel is correct, these files could have been doctored. He has claimed that providing cover for Red Army terrorists was a "hobby" for Herr Honecker, who fled them out with new identities at a Stasi holiday camp near Frankfurt an der Oder. Herr Honecker, through the East German news agency ADN, has angrily denied this.

The disgraced East German leader has found an unexpected ally in Herr de Maizière, who told *Bild* that it was pure guesswork to suggest that Herr Honecker had any idea of what was happening and that the Stasi cover-up probably had a life of its own.

The Stasi files, which cover six million people, were "laundered" on behalf of communist lawyers and judges. New evidence shows this was one of the last acts of Hans Modrow, the last communist prime minister, who authorised it three weeks before the March 18 general election swept him from office.

While most university students in Hungary learn English, the Peace Corps plan to spread American English to the masses may be seen as yet another form of Yankee cultural imperialism. Britain has for the most part been slow to promote the Queen's English, preferring instead to invest in a Hungarian fund to help budding entrepreneurs.

In any event, it seems Kennedy's youthful vigour, idealism and broad Boston accent are more in demand. A

Critics scorn Iliescu vow of democracy

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN BUCHAREST

ION Iliescu, the former leading Communist, was inaugurated as Romanian president yesterday in a ceremony of Soviet-style pomp and circumstance overshadowed by a US diplomatic boycott in protest at recent mob violence by pro-government miners.

The new president's promises of a commitment to democracy and human and minority rights were treated with scepticism by Western diplomats who did attend, including the British ambassador, Michael Atkinson, who denied any split on policy between London and Washington. "I heard some good words spoken in the speech. But in all the world's democracies, we are looking for deeds in Romania to follow up the words," he said outside the grandiose Athenaeum concert hall here, where the ceremony took place guarded by more than 600 troops. "I am looking for change which has not yet been seen."

The swearing-in was performed by Alexandru Birladeanu, another former leading member of the Communist party under Ceausescu, now the Senate chairman, whose presence added to accusations that the new administration is merely a collection of old Communists.

Opposition leaders were critical of Mr Iliescu's speech, in which he again sought to depict anti-government rioting last week as a premeditated fascist coup attempt and to justify calling in the miners because of army and police weakness.

"The speech was not only economic with the truth, it was a travesty of the truth," said Ion Ratiu, the failed presidential candidate of the right-wing National Peasant party, whose home and offices were ransacked by miners.

"He said that the miners were brought in to restore law and order, that is not what I saw. Iliescu handed over responsibility of the legitimate organs of the state to members of a vigilante group who ran through the streets terrorising people who had been targeted. The government says only six people died, but figures I have received show it is over 20."

Mr Ratiu, who was whisked away under heavy guard through booing government supporters, claimed angrily that Mr Iliescu had failed to use the postponed inauguration to apologise for the miners' wave of terror. Mr Iliescu, aged 60, emphasised Romania's dependence on outside help in a speech in which he attempted unsuccessfully to dissociate the ruling National Salvation Front from the worst of the violence.

Romanians in the auditorium said that the effect was limited because one man who was sitting on the platform had been seen directing the miners in central Bucharest on June 15.

Mr Iliescu admitted for the first time: "Unfortunately, on June 14 and 15 there was over-reaction in the process to restore public order. Institutions, party headquarters and homes were broken into, and citizens unconnected with earlier events were roughed up. We unequivocally dissociate ourselves from all actions that transcended the legal framework. All that is the subject of a detailed parliamentary enquiry." The 23-strong com-

mission is dominated by deputies and senators from the front, and few Western observers expect any attempt will be made to bring the miners to justice once it has finally reported.

Diplomats claimed that yesterday's speech, in which an attempt was made for the first time by the new president to distance himself from some of the mob violence conducted against students, intellectuals and gypsies, was mainly for international consumption.

Washington's decision to boycott the ceremony, which some Romanians compared with similar political setpieces staged by Ceausescu, was based partly on a text acquired by the CIA of a speech lauding the miners and delivered to them by Mr Iliescu in Bucharest last week.

At yesterday's elaborate ceremony there was little attempt to disguise the renewed power of the Securitate men who have been backing Mr Iliescu in recent days while he has faced criticism from leading police and army officers. A hundred soldiers standing guard were given orders to march by a Securitate agent dressed in a crumpled suit and off-white shoes.

Letters, page 13

Magistrates in France seek justice

Paris - As many as 6,000 investigating magistrates in France will today abandon their duties to take part in a nationwide day of action (Philip Jacobson writes). Infuriated by shrinking budgets, huge case loads and political interference, they have organised what borders on being an illegal strike.

The three main bodies representing the *Juges d'instruction* say spending on the administration of justice has been under pressure for 40 years and is now just 1.36 per cent of the national budget.

Government figures show cases have increased by 200 to 300 per cent over the last decade. Pierre Arpaillange, the justice minister and a former magistrate, is expected to come under heavy fire for failing to fight their corner in the cabinet.

Walesa 'forced into power'

Warsaw - Lech Walesa, struggling for power with his old Solidarity comrades, said yesterday that circumstances would force him to become Poland's president against his will.

"We need a president with an axe determined, sharp, straightforward, who does not hinder democracy but immediately fills the gaps," he told the *Solidarity* daily.

Doe pardons rebel leader

Monrovia - Liberia has dropped embezzlement charges against Charles Taylor, the National Patriotic Front rebel leader, in a general amnesty.

The front, which is trying to unseat President Doe, was reported yesterday to be within 30 miles of Monrovia. (AFP)

Honecker denies he harboured terrorists

FROM ANNE MCELVOY IN EAST BERLIN

ERICH Honecker, East Germany's discredited former leader, yesterday denied reports that he had sanctioned the harbouring of West German terrorists.

He said that he first became aware of their presence in the country after their arrest.

Herr Honecker said reports that he and Erich Mielke, his chief of security, had arranged asylum for terrorists bore no relation to the truth. The former leadership, he said,

had always condemned terrorism and had contributed to the fight against it.

Herr Honecker, who is unwell and lives in a high-security Soviet hospital outside Berlin, volunteered his statement through Wolfgang Vogel, his lawyer, who has taken on the defence of Inge Viett and Susanne Albrecht, the accused terrorists. Most of the population, who now refer to their former leader as a criminal, refuse to believe the statement.

Peter Diestel, the interior minister, said last Tuesday that his ministry had evidence that the sheltering of terrorists had been an "individual hobby" of Herr Honecker and Herr Mielke, unknown to other branches of the security services.

Matthias Gehler, the government's spokesman, has condemned the publication by an East German newspaper of the addresses of more than 9,000 premises used by the Stasi as observation posts and telephone-tapping centres.

The publication in *Tageszeitung* provoked many East Germans to undertake "Stasi-hunts" in search of their local branches. Many of the bases were in unmarked rooms in factories or private flats. Innocent men, women and children now living in the properties were in fear of attack, he said.

Uzbekistan votes for sovereignty

FROM REUTERS IN MOSCOW

THE Soviet Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan yesterday approved a "declaration of sovereignty", Tass said, in another challenge to President Gorbachev.

The document, passed at the first meeting of a new parliament in Tashkent, declared the supremacy of Uzbekistan laws in the republic and placed domestic and foreign policy under the authority of the local government. The official news agency said, Tass reported that the document declared "sovereignty of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic within a renewed Soviet federation" but did not amount to secession from the Soviet Union.

An employee at the Uzbek news agency, Uztag, said the wording was similar to legislation passed by the Russian Federation that its laws took precedence over the Soviet constitution.

"The declaration proclaims Uzbekistan's state sovereignty and the supremacy of republican laws on its entire territory," Tass said.

It reported that the declara-

Hungary surrenders to voices of America

FROM ERNEST BECK IN BUDAPEST

REAL American English, the most desired United States export since take-away hamburgers, came to Eastern Europe this week with the arrival in Hungary of 61 enthusiastic Peace Corps volunteers who will soon be teaching English-starved Hungarians how to speak like their favourite Hollywood heroes.

A year after President Bush promised to send a volunteer army of English teachers behind the Iron Curtain, now in tatters, the first group rolled into Budapest eager to spread their twangs. Mid-Western draws and slurred Brooklynese to a country which only recently abandoned Russian as a compulsory foreign language.

The Peace Corps, founded by John Kennedy when he was president in the idealistic, do-good days of the early

1960s, had previously been deployed only in the Third World. With the retreat of communism in Eastern Europe and the need for such countries as Hungary to integrate quickly with the West, speaking English has become a skill as valuable as any million-dollar commercial joint venture.

Demand for teachers has far outstripped supply. Hungary's now unemployed Russian-language teachers are just beginning retraining courses to teach English.

Vance Hyndman, the Peace Corps director in Hungary, told the new arrivals that they might be besieged like rock stars by students and school officials needing their services. There has been tremendous competition for the teachers, who will be given a 10-week crash course in Hungarian before being posted to schools and

teacher-training colleges throughout Hungary. They appear ready for the challenge.

Al Belini, a teacher from New Jersey, said: "I know very little about Hungary, but could not give up the chance to be a part of history." The oldest member of the group, a retired teacher, aged 73, speaks in the slow, sugary cadences of her native Florida.

While most university students in Hungary learn English, the Peace Corps plan to spread American English to the masses may be seen as yet another form of Yankee cultural imperialism. Britain has for the most part been slow to promote the Queen's English, preferring instead to invest in a Hungarian fund to help budding entrepreneurs.

In any event, it seems Kennedy's youthful vigour, idealism and broad Boston accent are more in demand. A

US embassy official said: "If JFK could see us today from wherever he is, he would certainly be very proud."

● **Taking stock:** Capitalism's long-awaited comeback in Hungary will be celebrated today with great fanfare as the stock exchange here, the first in Eastern Europe, officially opens to the public.

Although the exchange has been working since January 1988, offering bonds and stocks to institutional investors in a limited way, it now has the legal statutes to function as a self-governing institution and to allow ordinary citizens to play the market.

As the doors open to all and sundry, it is uncertain exactly what and how much they will be able to buy. Trading will continue to take place only three days a week for a few hours. "It is a baby market, a sort of proto-capitalism," said an observer.

Spotlight on Bush's son in savings bank scandal

From MARTIN FLETCHER in WASHINGTON

CONGRESSIONAL investigators examining America's Savings and Loan crisis, the biggest financial scandal in US history, have locked on to the activities of Neil Bush, the President's 34-year-old son and a former director of the bankrupt Silverado S & L.

They unearthed evidence this week that Washington delayed the closure of Silverado until after the 1988 presidential election, and federal regulators established in January that Neil Bush had three times violated conflict-of-interest rules. No action had yet been taken against him.

The disclosures coincided with signs that Democrats and Republicans may be preparing for a battle to pin responsibility for the S & L debacle on the other side in this year of mid-term elections.

Latest estimates suggest that up to 1,700 failing S & Ls - similar to British building societies - may eventually

have to be seized by the government, at a cost to the American taxpayer of about \$150 billion (£87 billion).

The sheer enormity of the crisis is just beginning to register with the public, but until now neither party has tried to blame the other because both the Reagan White House and the Democrat-controlled Congress participated in the key regulatory decisions in the early 1980s which contributed to the subsequent speculative boom-and-bust.

On Tuesday, however, Martin Fitzwater, the White House press secretary, sharply raised the stakes. Responding to a Democratic congressman, who had dubbed Mr Bush "the S & L president", he referred to legislation the Democrats had "pushed through ... in the dead of night" in the early 1980s and claimed they played "a big role" in the collapse of the S & L industry.

In searing remarks which betrayed just how sensitive this issue is, the normally amiable Mr Fitzwater urged reporters to investigate the congressman's financial background and added: "If they want to make a political issue of this, we'll be glad to do it."

In the context of a scandal so large and abstract that the public has difficulty comprehending it, the specific case of Neil Bush could prove highly damaging to the Republicans. He was a director of the Colorado-based Silverado S & L which was closed by the government in December 1988, at an estimated cost to the taxpayer of \$1 billion.

In evidence to the House banking committee on Wednesday, a former S & L regulator said that in October 1988 his superiors in Washington ordered him to suspend closure for two months until after the presidential campaign.

At the same hearing, the committee released a document outlining three charges of alleged insider abuse levelled against Mr Bush by the Office of Thrift Supervision, the government's S & L supervisory body, in January.

The most serious allegation that Mr Bush did not tell Silverado of a business partner's \$3 million loan to his oil exploration company when Silverado was writing off most of an \$11 million loan to that same partner.

The document recommended that Mr Bush and the other Silverado executives be barred from the banking industry. All but Mr Bush agreed to the ban earlier this year. The thrift supervision office agreed to mitigate the penalty against Mr Bush, but he has refused to accept that either, insisting on his innocence.

In a separate appearance before the committee, Mr Bush strenuously denied any wrongdoing and the White House has denied with equal force that the president's son has been shielded from prosecution. The thrift supervision office has denied that Silverado's closure was delayed for political reasons and said there was insufficient evidence to sustain the original penalty against Mr Bush.

However, one Democrat member of the committee, Frank Annunzio, asked: "Can any agency of the US fairly and impartially investigate the son of the president?"



Thai police arresting Sit Nyein Aye, a Burmese student exile, outside the Burmese embassy in Bangkok yesterday after he began a hunger strike against the detention in Raagoon of Aung San Sun Kyi, the opposition leader

Explosions rock American carrier

From JOE JOSEPH in TOKYO

A CREWMAN was reported missing and 16 others were injured, nine of them seriously, after two explosions rocked the US Navy aircraft carrier Midway as it coasted off eastern Japan yesterday.

The accident is the latest in a string of mishaps and blunders involving American forces here that have been

testing the Japanese people's patience.

The blaze that triggered the two explosions was brought under control by crewmen. The vessel, the flagship of the US Seventh Fleet, was steaming under its own power last night but was not returning to its home port of Yokosuka, near Tokyo. Jeff Gradeck, a

military spokesman at Yokosuka, said: "There were 16 casualties and one man reported missing". The seriously injured were flown to hospitals in Japan.

There was immediate concern because the Midway is equipped to carry nuclear weapons, which is a controversial issue in Japan. But the

worries faded with news that the fire had been contained.

The Midway, which is to be replaced by the Independence next year, is not nuclear-powered and Japanese sources said that it was not carrying nuclear weapons. The US is supposed to advise Japan if it is bringing nuclear weapons into the country.

France pledges to stand by its African family

From SUSAN MACDONALD in LA BAULE

PRESIDENT Mitterrand told the heads of state and other representatives of the 35 African countries assembled here yesterday for the 16th Franco-African summit that France would not abandon Africa.

"France is decided on pursuing her help for Africa," Mitterrand said emphatically at the opening of the summit in this French seaside resort west of Nantes. Unlike other Western countries which have now made the opening-up towards democracy a priority for continued aid, Mitterrand declared that "France would be faithful to her history".

The question of installing democracy, he said, was one of time coupled with economic development, and France would stay at Africa's side to continue to help in the development of the continent.

He reminded his audience that France was the biggest African aid donor among the world's most industrialised countries and that new, more flexible structures for debt repayment had been agreed in Ottawa two years ago, thanks to a French initiative.

Now, he said, the world's poorest countries should no

longer be given loans but offered 100 per cent gifts of money. He suggested for countries with intermediary status that there should be a 5 per cent ceiling on interest paid on loans made by the French state agency concerned with Africa. He was also determined to plead for Africa at the EC Dublin summit next week and in Houston next month for the seven most industrialised nations.

"France will stand by you," Mitterrand told the leaders who had walked on to the stage in the conference hall in depressing silence. It is understood that there were harsh words at informal talks on Tuesday. Some leaders complained that France, and world opinion, were putting enormous pressure on them at a difficult time.

King Hassan of Morocco, chairman of this year's conference, welcomed participants to a summit with a difference, due to the radical world events in the year since the last meeting. Africa, he said, could have stayed outside this renaissance but was too much part of the world not to be affected.

French disillusion, page 12

N Korea ready to talk with Seoul

From REUTER in SEOUL

NORTH Korea yesterday agreed to resume political talks with South Korea after three weeks of criticising Seoul for a meeting between President Roh Tae Woo and the leader of the Soviet Union, the North's old ally.

Pyeongyang proposed that government officials meet at the border village of Panmunjom on June 28 to arrange unprecedented talks between their prime ministers, a Seoul government spokesman said. It also proposed a Panmunjom meeting on July 12 to discuss reunification of the Korean peninsula, split at the end of the second world war.

"North Korea is making a complete change of position in a week but we welcome their decision to reopen dialogue," the spokesman said.

● Agent's remorse: Kim Hyun Hui, a self-confessed North Korean agent who blew up a South Korean airliner in 1987, killing 115 people, told a press conference yesterday she lived in constant remorse.

Kim, aged 28, was convicted, sentenced to hang and then pardoned, though she says she deserved to die for her crime. She said she had not yet begun to think of her future, a job and how to respond to many offers of marriage. (Reuters)



Kim: constant remorse for airline bombing

Canadian Airlines hit by smoking ban

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

CANADIAN Airlines has been thrown into a tailspin by an internal report which shows that banning smoking on flights, a move that will

be forced on all registered Canadian airlines by Ottawa, may cost the company more than £20 million a year. The airline is especially concerned that Japanese will turn to rival airlines.

Half of Japanese air travellers smoke and those who go first or business class smoke more than passengers in economy seats.

"More than 80 per cent of all the people on our services between Canada and Japan originate from Japan," said the executive vice-president of the airline, Kevin Jenkins. Banning smoking on these flights, he said, would cost the company about £20 million and put it at a commercial disadvantage.

When the company's main rival on the routes - Japanese Airlines - heard of the ban, it sent a letter to Mr Jenkins. "So sorry," it said. Still, the company's plight could be

worse. Originally, the Canadian government had said airlines would have to outlaw smoking on all flights in one fell swoop on July 1.

But after being presented with the results of the Canadian Airlines' report, politicians agreed to let the airlines phase out smoking over four years.

A small loophole in the legislation means the company can reduce smoking on other flights and leave the Japanese to puff until the total ban is required in three years.

Canadian Airlines have opened a lobbying campaign aimed at persuading other airlines, or even international legislators, to outlaw smoking in the same way as the Canadians and to provide a "level playing field" in which everyone will at least have the same problem.

"Our aircraft will lead less maintenance because the air filters will not need cleaning so often and the cabin will be cleaner for longer," admitted Mr Jenkins. "But it will only save us a tiny proportion of the amount we will lose."

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MR MAJOR'S SMALL COUP

John Major's extraordinary sally into the realm of European monetary reform last night must have left his European counterparts puzzled. What is so remarkable, they must have asked, about a British finance minister parroting his boss's well-known view that Delors "two and three" — the notorious way-stations on the route to European economic and political union — are unacceptable to Britain? They knew that already.

They know that Britain is an ardent supporter of the free market and 1992. They know that Britain believes that the rest of the Community pays only lip service to markets, and is deeply suspicious of the deference it perceives in Brussels to corporatist interests. They know that M Delors' more advanced proposals for a single monetary authority, a single bank and a single currency leave most Britons baffled, even those who understand them. The idea of a central community bank — a Eurofed — repels London because it would not be accountable to elected governments, to whom, as John Major said last night, the electorate looks to ensure its economic wellbeing. They know that collective determination of British fiscal policy, British mortgage rates and the British Budget judgement is too much for most Britons to stomach.

Yet Mr Major teased his listeners with promises that "some form of European Monetary Union is desirable", which in time could indeed "involve institutional and currency development". He wanted no Big Bang. He wanted — rightly — a Europe which does not put up barriers against trade with the East. He wanted merely "convergence of economic performance, low inflation and stable exchange rates". But, turning from these motherhood statements, he said that convergence would require, given the significant differences in inflation within the Community, divergent interest rates. And that alone, he said, "argues strongly against" a single European monetary authority.

Mr Major's most constructive contribution was for a "hard" ecu, a parallel Euro-currency

to stand shoulder to shoulder (though he did not say this) with the mighty mark. This would be controlled by a new European Monetary Fund, a body of utterly Thatcherite rigour, to ensure that the ecu is not inflationary. Few Europeans are likely to take this ecu too seriously, but then they are not meant to. This is a designer currency, cunningly crafted to pass muster with Margaret Thatcher, a currency that manages to be anti-inflationary, European yet not German, an astonishing creation.

In practice the British ecu would be merely a sort of traveller's cheque. It would end up tied, presumably, to the one currency it was supposed not to be, the mark. In other words, the new ecu must either be inflationary, in which case the Germans will not want to know about it, or non-inflationary, in which case why not go for the mark?

The whole business is an exercise in European politics, and none the worse for that. Mr Major and the foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, have clearly decided to play directly to the current anti-British hysteria in European circles. They have, significantly, presumed British membership of the European exchange rate mechanism (Delors "one"), and they hardly even bother to mention it. Britain is likely to join before the year is out. But they have given not an inch to the more complex institutional structures that M Delors would like to see in place before he returns to national politics in France.

Mr Major's speech was thus a classic case of jaw-jaw being better than war-war. He hopes to keep Brussels talking at least through the next British election, and through the next German one as well. He knows that Europe is passing through a delicate period, one in which the precise future of its neighbourhood superpower, Germany, remains uncertain. Mr Major is to be congratulated on a very modest coup. Who knows what may turn up? Who knows who may have moved on before anybody takes these ideas seriously? When it comes to Europe, Britain is right to travel under its patron saint, Mr Micawber.

PRISONERS OF HABIT

Both the police and the prison service insist on operating in ways which reflect the attitudes of the 1970s, rather than those suitable for the 1990s. The police, the Audit Commission says in a report published yesterday, have exploited Home Office supervision by using it as a cover for bad line management. Every station sergeant knows how to gum up the system by sticking to the letter and boosting the great god of a policeman's life, overtime.

The prison officers are clearly set on manipulating an instinctive public support for their work to squeeze ever more pay out of the Home Office. Since they have rarely failed in this play, blindness to the public interest can easily take over from any concept of service. From any other point of view, yesterday's five to one vote for industrial action could hardly be worse timed.

Even before the Strangeways riot had ended, the Prison Officers' Association sought a mandate for industrial action from its members over the claim that jails are understaffed. Now that the mandate has been granted, the association risks committing ritual suicide. Even modest industrial action could spur prisoners into another bloody and costly revolt. Few have forgotten that the spark for the events of April 30, 1986, when 18 prisons were hit by rioting within a matter of hours, was the start of a national overtime ban by prison staff.

The essence of the officers' complaint is that the Home Office has not honoured in full its obligations under the 1987 Fresh Start deal. This revolutionised the working lives of officers by introducing a fixed 39-hour week, with sharply reduced overtime opportunities, in return for a substantial rise in basic pay. The prison department promised to make up half the lost overtime hours through staff increases.

If the Home Office has erred, the fault has probably been over-ambition rather than duplicity. One of the aims of the restructuring was to create an overall 25 per cent "efficiency saving" in the department's running costs over a five-year period. This was to be done partly

by ending the prison service's excessive reliance on overtime working. But the Home Office's goals appear mutually incompatible: if it achieves the 25 per cent saving, it cannot meet its staffing promises. If it honours the latter it cannot please the Treasury. The only way out of this predicament would be a substantial reduction in the total prison population, which for all its efforts in this direction, the government has yet to achieve.

The union's decision in favour of industrial action is wrong in every sense. To argue about manning levels is to beg the question of what kind of prison system is needed. On this there is as yet no real unanimity. Most people, including the government, pay at least lip service to the idea that prison should seek to reform as well as merely to contain criminals. If that effort to rehabilitate is to be at the heart of prison policy, its implications must be faced.

Lord Justice Woolf, in his enquiry into this year's riots, is determined to probe the underlying causes of prison unrest. He should not stop when he gets to the second layer. He should keep peeling until he uncovers bone, however much Treasury ministers might wince. Privatisation, ministers have discovered from a feasibility study, may improve security and conditions in some prisons, but at considerable expense. If a contractor is given the chance to run a remand centre in a pilot project, the specification will have to be for single-cell occupancy. Sophisticated locking devices and surveillance may offset part of the cost, but ministers would be foolish to regard the private sector as offering the pass-key to prison peace as well as frugality.

The outcome must be a compromise, with a drastic cut in the prison population as the keystone of a new deal. The suspicion must be that many prison officers are happy to see numbers rising, providing it means more money spent on prisons and on their pay. That is not the public's interest. There must be continued pressure, unencumbered by the emotion of prison officer militancy, to rid Britain of its dreadful prisons.

THEIR LAST BATTLE

The minister for the armed forces, Archie Hamilton, disclosed in the Commons defence debate this week that a number of Britain's more celebrated regiments may be embarking on their last battle, a battle for survival. Commanding officers will no doubt fight to resist rationalisation. But the eclipse of the Soviet threat has presented the government with a rare opportunity to complete a reorganisation which its predecessors began more than two decades ago.

The army is based on a regimental system, the origins of which lie in the 17th century when men were enlisted by the local squire. In its present form it dates back to Edward Cardwell, war secretary between 1868 and 1874, who not only ended the purchase of commissions, but rebuilt the army to defend the growing empire. He gave each infantry regiment two battalions (one to stay at home while the other was abroad) and endowed it with its own county for recruiting.

The system is good for morale. The Shropshire had served alongside kith and kin (or he did when the King's Shropshire Light Infantry existed). This not only helps him to combat homesickness but fills him with local loyalty and pride. Other countries have tried to copy the British model, which suggests that they acknowledge its success.

The model did not survive the last century intact. The post-imperial rundown of their postings stripped most regiments of two under-second battalion and emphasised two under-second battalions: the expense and inflexibility lying weaknesses: the expense and inflexibility of the regimental system. A large number of self-contained units duplicates overhead costs. In both world wars the system broke down in the difficulty of filling gaps in the

line. Cardwell never dreamt of total war. As men died by thousands in the trenches, recruiting could hardly keep up.

The ministry partially overcame these problems when it reorganised the infantry in the 1960s. First, it merged a number of units into large regiments (with three battalions each) to help promote economy of scale. Then it grouped them into administrative divisions, to share training, recruiting and other services to improve operational flexibility.

This reorganisation was never finished. Some regiments fought to keep their identity. While there are now five large regiments with three battalions (and four more with two each), the others, including two foot guards regiments, have only one battalion apiece. These must now be amalgamated. Nor can the cavalry and Royal Tank Regiment be immune. Ministers should also consider merging some of the army's technical and supporting corps, on which a start was made earlier this year.

Such reforms would still fall short of what the avant-garde are demanding: the end of the regimental system to be replaced by a corps of infantry and integrated support. The completion of the 1960s reforms would merely constitute a pathetically overdue compromise. The defence secretary, Tom King, has a chance to be a second Cardwell. But the army traditionalists should see his moderate reorganisation as its least worst way forward. Venerable regiments may hold a special place in public affection. Some may even have their value as recruitment and even training freemasonries. But the government cannot afford to be too squeamish in forging the highly-skilled fighting force required by modern defence needs.

Troubled scene in Romania

From Dr Dennis Deletant

Sir, Word has reached me from student representatives of the Faculty of Architecture in Bucharest that a number of their colleagues have been placed under arrest after being cruelly beaten by miners. Among their number are Miss Teodora Marin, Miss Andreea Morarescu and Mr Dinu Marin. The President of the Students' Association "December 16-21", Mr Marian Munteanu, has suffered a similar fate.

The arrested students' only "crime" is to have peacefully demonstrated against the threat of a return to totalitarian rule in Romania.

If these students are not to suffer the fate of those who dared to protest under Ceausescu, and if freedom of expression is not to disappear once more in Romania, the firmest protest must be delivered by the international community to the Romanian government. Unfortunately today's news that European Community ambassadors are attending President Iliescu's inauguration, although the US ambassador is not, suggest that that may not happen.

Yours faithfully,
DENNIS DELETANT,
University of London,
School of Slavonic and East European Studies,
Senate House,
Malet Street, WC1E 7HU.
June 20.

From Mr Lionel Bloch
Sir, In your leader (June 15) on the tragedy of Romania you underlined the fact that Mr Ion Ratiu, the leader of the National Peasants' Party, had warned the West not to trust President Iliescu.

I suggest that the shameful violence with which the neo-communist regime in Bucharest put down the peaceful protests of its opponents is a direct consequence of the West's unwillingness to heed these warnings.

Mr Iliescu is a close friend of Mr Gorbachev and the fact that the Soviet regime killed recently a number of protesters in Armenia and elsewhere without being rebuffed by the leaders of the civilised world has not been lost on the Romanian National Salvation Front.

Your criticism of the credulous British politicians who gushed about last month's fraudulent elections in Romania is timely. It may be worth remembering that, as in Germany in 1933, not every regime that somehow manages to get a majority at the polls is necessarily democratic.

Yours faithfully,
LIONEL BLOCH,
9 Wimpole Street, W1.
June 15.

Obscene calls case

From Mr J. R. Benton

Sir, A Times report (later editions, June 18) erroneously refers to a man accused of making obscene telephone calls escaping prosecution because of a Crown Prosecution Service and court error.

The defendant was committed for trial, pleaded guilty and was sentenced for the most serious offence revealed by the criminal inquiry. By an excess of zeal he was, at the same time as the commitment for trial on the most serious charge, erroneously committed for plea in respect of three lesser charges. There was no power to deal with these lesser charges at the crown court. Ordinarily, they would have been adjourned at the magistrates' court pending the outcome of the crown court case. Once that outcome was known, a decision would have been made on whether the public interest required their continuance or discontinuance.

The situation that has now arisen is exactly the same — it is open to the prosecution to ask the magistrates' court to re-list the outstanding alleged offences and this the prosecution have decided not to do because the public interest would not be served by their continuance. Given the substantial sentence imposed by the crown court judge for the most serious offence.

Yours faithfully,
J. R. BENTON (Acting Chief Crown Prosecutor,
Thames Valley),
Crown Prosecution Service,
Berkshire Branch Office,
4th Floor,
Liverpool Victoria House,
7 Cheapside,
Reading, Berkshire.
June 18.

Changes on abortion

From Lord Robertson of Oakridge

Sir, Lord Brightman, writing (June 19) on the proposed changes to the law on abortion now going through Parliament, states that, if the diagnosis is "risk to the life of the pregnant woman", the law is, and has been, since long before the Abortion Act 1967, that "abortion to birth" is permissible, adding: "The life of the mother must come first".

In fact, the existing laws (the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, the 1967 Abortion Act and the 1929 Infant Life Preservation Act) have the net effect of preventing any abortion after 28 weeks other than, in the words of the Infant Life Preservation Act, "to preserve the life of the mother". This is a much more restrictive requirement than that proposed in the new legislation where the risk to the mother's life is not quantified and therefore the provision can be interpreted in a multitude

Out of step with Mr Smith on rates

From Mr John Charnan

Sir, Your leading article, "Sensible Mr Smith" (June 15), which reviews the Labour Party's plans for financing local government, supports Mr Smith's view that rental values are to be preferred to capital values as a basis for rates, but nowhere do you or Mr Smith state from where the evidence of rental values is to be derived.

Since rent control was introduced between the wars, the market for rented housing has progressively diminished until it has reached the present situation where it is virtually non-existent, apart from the market in luxury properties and some flats. That is why the Layfield committee recommended that capital values be used, a recommendation that has subsequently been supported by the great majority of informed opinion.

Elsewhere in the article you advise Labour to retain some features of the poll tax, including the principle of some charge being levied on every household. It has always seemed to me that poll tax would be a much better tax if it were part only of the system by which the domestic sector paid its share of the cost of local government, rather than the current situation whereby it bears the whole of the cost of that share.

If every property were to pay a "standing charge" based on its capital value, with a uniform poundage linked to inflation (just as happens currently with non-domestic property), and then, in addition, a "consumption charge", initially pitched at a very low level, but subsequently fixed entirely at the local authority's discretion, was payable by every person, the domestic sector would be able to contribute its share of the additional burden would fall on the voters, who could register their support for, or opposition to, the council's high-spending policies through the ballot box.

In addition to being fairer than the present system it would be much simpler to operate; rebates would be applied to the property tax element only, so that the regulations governing the poll tax element could be extremely simple. It would then have most of the attributes of a good tax — easily understood, cheap to collect, difficult to evade (except, with the poll tax element, by becoming dis-

most of its training programmes and is in serious danger of closing.

The Government's privatisation of training means that training agency funds are now administered by the training and enterprise councils (TECs) being set up in each area. Whether the cuts in this particular agency is suffering as the result of the new TEC in East Anglia holding different priorities for funding or whether as a result of the huge reduction in government funding for training generally, the issue raises questions about the quality and viability of the crucial services to make community care work in practice.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE JOHNSTON (Secretary),
LUCIANNE SAWYER (Chairman),
TESSA NEWBY (Treasurer),
United Kingdom Home Care Association,
206 Worpole Road,
Wimbledon, SW20.

From Mr Clive Johnston and others

Sir, In the light of the current government policies for care in the community we write to express our grave concern at some of the consequences of cuts in central funding for training.

Due to demographic changes there is destined to be a vast shortfall in the numbers of people available to give the essential support to frail and disabled people living in their own homes. Proper training programmes are one way of ensuring a supply of recruits and of maintaining standards.

Yet we are already getting evidence that this crucial training is being cut. In East Anglia a training agency specialised in providing approved training for both younger and older people going into caring jobs, many of whom have previously been unemployed, has been forced to cut

most of its training programmes and is in serious danger of closing.

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United Kingdom Home Care Association,
206 Worpole Road,
Wimbledon, SW20.

From Bishop Maurice Wood

Sir, Mr Chaine's whimsical letter (June 14), suggesting that the best archbishops had six-letter names, has unwitting support from Michael Ramsey himself. Anselm (1093) was an archbishop "whom Ramsey always regarded as the biggest mind and best archbishop among his predecessors". (Owen Chadwick, *Michael Ramsey: A Life*).

As a retired diocesan bishop, and therefore far removed from close ecclesiastical politics, I happened to wake up this morning, saying to myself, on behalf of the six-letter Bishop of St Alban's, "Is there a change in the Canterbury climate? If I'm not a horse, am I a primate?"

Yours faithfully,
MAURICE WOOD,
St Mark's House,
Englefield,
Reading, Berkshire.
June 14.

From Mr Michael Spencer, QC
Sir, According to Lord Brightman, the select committee of the House of Lords which he chaired concluded that:

If... an unborn child were diagnosed as grossly abnormal and unable to lead any meaningful life (my emphasis), there is in the opinion of the Committee no logic in requiring the mother to carry her unborn child to full term merely because the diagnosis was too late to enable an operation for abortion to be carried out before the 28th completed week.

Lord Brightman states that the law permits a termination only if there is "substantial risk" that the child if born would suffer from

Homes seen in a wider context

From Mr Julian Heddly

Sir, Although I welcome the housing minister's plans to extend the programme of hostel accommodation for single homeless

(report, June 18), such a programme can only treat the symptoms of government neglect of young people's aspirations to make a dignified transition from living at home towards independence.

Having recently completed a study among EC countries of policies and programmes aimed at providing an integrated package of assistance to young people aged 16 to 25, moving towards independence, I have been struck by the comparatively niggardly and piecemeal government approach in the UK.

The *de facto* policy seems to be that young people encountering difficulties should not have left home and have only themselves to blame. Contrast this with the official approaches in France and Germany which recognise the universal phenomenon of leaving home in terms of providing, under one roof, a range of services linked with accommodation — skills training, job counselling, health education, leisure and sports activities and advice on permanent housing.

In France alone over 100,000 bed places a year are provided and nearly 10 times that number are able to avail themselves of the services offered. Unless and until a holistic approach is taken by government policy-makers to tackling years of neglect of people's aspirations to train, obtain employment, and live in decent accommodation, no amount of *ad hoc* hostel provision will meet the complex problems which face large numbers of institutionally disadvantaged young people now and in the future.

Yours faithfully,
JULIAN HEDDLY,
1 Bexhill Road, SW14.
June 19.

From Mr Patrick Cornwell
Sir, Homeless people need permanent accommodation and a sufficient income to be able to keep it. They do not need to be rounded up by the police under the Vagrancy Act and herded into church halls and disused hospital wards.

The Women's National Commission argued (report, June 13) that young people under 25 must get the adult rate of social security benefit if they are to stand a chance of surviving in independent accommodation. Many young people cannot afford to stay in emergency hostels, some of which now refuse to accept under-25s, whom they see as a financial risk.

The vast majority of organisations providing hostels for homeless people have no problem filling their beds. Their overriding concern is the need for more permanent accommodation. This was well documented by Shil (Single Homeless in London) in 1985. This cross-party report estimated a need for 8,000 units of permanent accommodation for hostel residents.

Without anywhere to move people to, hostels sit up. Staff are faced with the agonising decision of evicting young people back on to the streets or allowing them to stay and continuing to turn others away.

Yours sincerely,
PATRICK CORNWELL
(Chairman, Executive Committee),
CHAIR (the Housing Campaign for Single People),
5-15 Cromer Street, WC1.
June 18.

From Mr William Frankel

Sir, The correspondence you publish today (June 18) on age discrimination prompts me to recount my own experience. I had, for a decade, held two part-time legal appointments as chairman of mental health and social security appeal tribunals. Last year, I reached the mandatory retirement age and my services ended with a polite letter of thanks from the Lord Chancellor (his predecessor, by the way, continued in office for many years after the retirement age he imposed on others).

It appears to me a pity that I — and others in the same situation — should arbitrarily be denied the opportunity of continuing our work. The accumulated experience should, on the contrary, be recognised as an enhancement of our value. I believe that in the United States age discrimination is on a par with sex and racial discrimination.

Yours etc.,
WILLIAM FRANKEL,
30 Montagu Square, W1.
June 18.

Exposed position?

From Mr Francis Wilford-Smith

Sir, I was a little concerned to read (The Times, June 13) that the new Bishop of Hereford, the Venerable John Oliver, is a "motor cycle enthusiast", as he describes himself (Leisure Reporter, June 15) as being a "middle of the road churchman".

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS WILFORD-SMITH,
Bentleys Farm,
Bosbury,
Ledbury, Herefordshire.
June 15.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

HEALTH

MEDICAL BRIEFING

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

Just a trace of the whodunits

Thieves who stole a stuffed buzzard from a school in Rotherham last week were warned that they risked permanent brain damage if they handled their prey because the taxidermist had used arsenic in his preparation. Sinister as the effects of arsenic can be, this must be an exaggeration, for it has been used to prevent putrefaction for centuries. Arsenic soap is still used in taxidermy today, even though arsenic injections in the dissecting room, introduced at the London Hospital in the mid-19th century, were soon abandoned. The Whitechapel surgeons developed blistering sores, euphemistically described in a contemporary text book as "troublesome". Dermatologists now accept that regular handling of arsenic can cause skin cancer.

Arsenic's importance in medicine has changed during the last 200 years. In the 19th century it was prescribed for both internal and external use and in Britain it seems to have first been popularised in 1786 by Dr Fowler of Stafford, who used it to treat intermittent fevers. In the 1840s it formed part of what must have been one of the first well-regulated clinical trials designed to compare the relative merits of arsenic and quinine in the treatment of fever. The Chinese probably used arsenic for the treatment of ague many centuries before. Dr Fowler's treatise. Both in the Far East, where arsenic was combined with black pepper and gum arabic, and in Europe,

it was the standard treatment for syphilis; it was still used for this purpose, in a rather different form, until the advent of antibiotics at the end of the second world war. As a paste, or a solution with or without the addition of mercury, it was prescribed within living memory for a wide variety of skin troubles including psoriasis, eczema, leprosy and the skin manifestations of leukaemia and other malignant disease. The caustic properties of arsenical paste were recognised by 19th century surgeons. Part of the considerable reputation of Sir Astley Cooper, who founded the fortunes of the Duff Coopers, was based on the care he gave to post-operative wounds. He was a great advocate of arsenical compounds, but acknowledged that their unwise application could spell disaster: this was illustrated comparatively recently by a man who applied his own home-mixed arsenical paste to a cancerous lesion, poisoned himself, and died.

Accidental industrial poisoning with arsenic has been comparatively common this century. In 1901, 6,000 drinkers in Manchester were slowly poisoned by beer contaminated with arsenic; even teetotallers are not safe, for within the last 15 years there has been a report of well water infiltrated by grasshopper bait.

Between the wars, arsenic was the most favoured poison used in homicide; very often when maliciously



administered it was given in repeated small doses because, since it is almost tasteless and without smell, it is difficult to detect and its symptoms mimic a wide variety of diseases. Most older doctors have stories of chronic arsenical poisoning — for example, of the person who lost weight, hair and condition while at home, but recovered from his anorexia, nausea and vomiting when admitted to hospital. After he was advised to forego his morning porridge, always prepared by his apparently loving wife to give him a good start for the day, he regained hair and health and lived to a ripe old age, still married.

Less fortunate was the expatriate whose morning coffee was suspect. He, too, lived but always thereafter walked around Norfolk with a high-stepping gait like that of a hackney horse; it served as a reminder of the peripheral nerve damage from which he had suffered. Arsenic has now been aban-

doned in most rat poisons, pesticides and weedkillers and it is no longer used as a depilatory. Aniline dyes have replaced it in wallpaper and household paints, but not before the American ambassador in Rome in the 1950s became seriously ill from ingesting the tiny flakes of green paint which had fallen from the ceiling onto her pillow.

Dangers in the dark

The countless thousands of mildly short-sighted people who tend to be lax about wearing spectacles when driving may be unaware of night myopia. This is a condition in which short-sightedness increases as dusk falls and darkness intensifies. Dr C.B. James and Dr R. Drew, from St Thomas's, London, have written to *The Lancet* to

draw the attention of patients and doctors alike to the recent judgment at Durham Crown Court in which a patient suffering from night myopia and not wearing his spectacles ran into and killed a pedestrian. Night myopia is difficult to correct because the amount of light present is constantly varying and is dependent on whether the driver

is on a lonely country road, or a well-lit street, whether it is moonlight, wet, or dry. It is impracticable to have a battery of spectacles of varying strength in the dashboard cubbyhole. But short-sighted people are advised that they should always wear their spectacles at night and that they should modify their driving when the light is poor.

Slow, dangerous bends ahead

Scube diving, by subjecting the body to unaccustomed and unnatural variations of pressure and temperature, can cause medical troubles. But these are usually comparatively mild when compared with those which affect deep-sea divers, as has been shown this week in the case of the driver from the Greenpeace vessel *Sirius* who had to be airlifted to a decompression chamber after getting into difficulties in the Atlantic.

Subjecting the body to environmental pressures appreciably greater than the barometric pressure found at or near sea level results in changes in the concentration of nitrogen in the blood. Such changes can have serious, or even fatal results if rapid decompression by surfacing too quickly is allowed to take place, driving the excess nitrogen out of the body tissues and fluids faster than it can be expired by the lungs. When this happens, bubbles collect in blood vessels, or in the tissue itself, thereby forming the dangerous air emboli so beloved by detective writers. The absorbed nitrogen takes a particularly long time to be expelled from fatty tissue, either from fatty deposits or from the central nervous system, the brain and spinal cord.

Divers, and the medical staff looking after them, have tables from which they work out the safe limits which divers can spend at certain depths and the time they can spend there. Other tables record the time which must be allowed for decompression so that it can take place safely, without any ensuing

sickness. A particular danger is repeated diving, without enough time between dives for a full recovery.

The symptoms the bubbles can produce are legion and are dependent on where they form. Technically, the term bends refers to simple decompression sickness. In bends, bubbles collect in the blood vessels and lymphatics in the skin around a joint, where they cause swelling and a mottled reddening of the skin, which in consequence becomes very itchy. X-rays show that, although gas collects around the joints, there is no joint damage, although the condition does result in excruciating pain.

Serious decompression sickness can affect either the lungs, in which case it is known as the chokes, or, in about 10 per cent of cases, the central nervous system. When a diver suffers from the chokes, the bubbles either obstruct the blood vessels leading to the lungs or form in the lung tissue itself; in either event the patient becomes blue and breathless and may collapse.

The most serious form of decompression sickness affects the blood supply to the brain or spine. Damage to either can cause a lasting, stroke-like disability because the spinal cord and the centres in the brain relating to balance and coordination have a less good blood supply than the rest of the brain. They are particularly vulnerable and injury to these parts is likely to manifest itself as a permanent limb weakness and a persistent unsteady gait.

What does an airline do if a pilot is high?

In an Anderson, a psychologist, recalls an airline pilot confessing to him that sometimes he was so drunk he could hardly climb into the cockpit. An almost equally chilling case was another client who regularly used heroin.

"She would take some every few days, so she was either zonked out or suffering withdrawal symptoms. Her colleagues would say to her 'You're not with us today', or 'You seem to get a lot of flu'."

"What was shocking was that she was a social worker. If her colleagues, who deal with such problems every day did not realise what was going on, what chance is there for the ordinary manager?"

Dr Anderson believes that such cases would not have happened if the airline and the council had implemented screening programmes. "The idea is to reach people before they get to that stage and give them help."

Drug testing is widespread in the United States, where it has been the subject of much debate. Tests on the military, for instance, brought a dramatic drop in the number of positives: from 10 per cent to 2 per cent in five years. On the other hand, two employees recently won suits in the California Supreme Court against their employers for breaching their rights to privacy.

Testing is still rare in

The safety implications of an airliner flown by a drug addict or a drunk at an atom plant are terrifying. Liz Gill reports on the growing practice of company screening

Britain, but there are growing pressures for its more widespread use. Last week the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) booklet *Drug Abuse at Work: A Guide to Employers* claimed there was a case for testing in some key jobs where "impairment due to drugs could have disastrous effects for the individual, colleagues, members of the public and the environment". Yesterday a conference of experts and employers considered the theory and practice of "Testing for drugs and alcohol in the workplace".

Dr Graham Lucas, consultant psychiatrist at King's College Hospital, London, and a medical adviser to the HSE, believes that, although alcohol remains the major hazard, the drug issue is of increasing importance.

"The concept of the spaced-out, degenerate junkie is nonsense," he says. "It is as likely to be that neat man with his 2.4 children, his 2.4 Jag and his 2.4 acres. In a hospital it could be the consultant surgeon as well as the porter."

Moreover, not only hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine cause trouble; the

misuse of prescribed drugs can be almost as dangerous, particularly the interaction between alcohol and the minor tranquilisers. "A sleeping pill at night followed by a pint at lunchtime the next day can significantly impair skills and concentration," Dr Lucas says.

The scale of drug abuse in the workplace is hard to quantify. Other indicators are up customs seizures, offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act, the number of notified addicts, which rose from 2,100 in 1978 to 9,000 in 1988, and referrals to agencies. Dr Lucas points out that up to half the people attending dependency clinics are in regular employment.

Users do not necessarily fall foul of the police, however, and companies which have done drug surveys are coy about publishing them. The consensus seems to have settled at around 5 per cent of a workforce (10 per cent are estimated to misuse alcohol).

The outward signs of alcohol and drug misuse — irritability, confusion, poor time-keeping, mood swings, increased short-term sickness

absence and deterioration in relationships — could stem from a variety of causes.

For this reason, Dr Anderson says, company managers should not try to diagnose. Their role is to judge work performance, bearing in mind that drink and drugs might be a cause of deterioration.

Dr Anderson runs a management consultancy helping companies set up and run such policies. His clients have come mostly from the oil and transportation industries. "You don't do it just because you are a nice guy, but because it is cost effective. It protects against negligence claims, cuts down on absenteeism, lateness, and accidents. One of the most inefficient things you can do is lose someone on whom you have spent money training."

So far he has not met resistance from employees. On the contrary, he says, trade unions welcome systems which help staff rather than punish them. "I'm not anti-drinking, in fact I'm a single-malt aficionado, and I hold civil liberties dear. But those include my freedom to travel in the

certain knowledge that the driver or the captain has not been drinking or snorting cocaine."

Testing can take several forms: pre-employment, after some incident such as a fight or an accident, as part of a rehabilitation programme, or random sampling. The trend so far has been for pre-employment or after incidents.

John Lowenstein, the managing director of Medscreen, which provides equipment and support services in this field, believes dozens of organisations have begun random testing. He says that procedures must be forensically scrupulous. His company uses the same alcohol testers as the police, urine collection is both private and foolproof, and positive results are double checked.

Most companies offer the individual some sort of help — counselling, therapy, and time off to attend a clinic. Dr Christopher Roythorne is the manager of medical services for the Conoco oil company in the United Kingdom and mainland Europe. The company tests both pre-employment and where somebody has been on a recovery programme, and it is prepared to subsidise such programmes by up to 80 per cent. In some cases the cost could be £6,000, though only one employee has been affected so far. "We aim to identify abuse before it gets to that point," Conoco is considering "for cause" (after an incident) testing and Dr Roythorne thinks there may be a case for random screening.

Most companies with substance-abuse programmes are in high-risk areas and it would be difficult to counter the safety argument: the disaster potential in a druged nuclear reactor worker or drunken chemical plant operative is enormous.

In other jobs, however, the issues may be more of performance and efficiency. Mr Lowenstein says: "I can't think of any job where it does not matter. I don't want my doctor or my bank manager affected by mind-altering sub-



Setting the limit: 10 per cent of employees are thought to be misusing alcohol

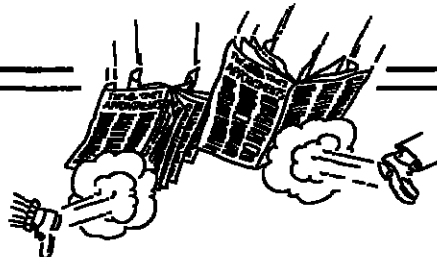
stances. Nor, for that matter, must they have been negotiating as part of a contract.

Nevertheless, Miss Howard can imagine circumstances in which a court would think it reasonable for a company to have asked for a test, such as where someone was badly impaired, where drugs have been found, or where there

had been a suspicious accident.

Employees whose work and behaviour is beyond reproach could, she thinks, hold out against signing their consent. If they were sacked they would have good grounds for unfair dismissal. "In such cases, management has to bite the bullet."

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THE TIMES

Deep into Heseltine country



A HOUSE in Belgravia would be most people's idea of having "arrived". But Anne Heseltine can't wait to leave London for her home in the country.

On Saturday, *The Times* looks behind the scenes at the Heseltine's home from home, an 18th century country house near Oxford, and meets two stone masons, a stable of Hanoverian horses — and a dog-eaten caricature of Mrs Thatcher.



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The

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They

THEY may have won the Turin glass in the 1990s, but the Italian race car driver, who has converted to Christianity, Leonardo Bufalino has won the Formula 1 world championship. The victory was a triumph for the Italian, who has won the second world war in English.

Night's *Life* magazine has a magnificent picture of a man, a woman, a child, a dog, a cat, a bird, a fish, a plant, a flower, a fruit, a vegetable, a mineral, a fossil, a meteorite, a comet, a planet, a star, a galaxy, a universe.

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FICTION

The novel as tedious rambo improvisation

In this novel a mini-skirted journalist from *The Times* called Fiona Hayes-Drummond claims she has been raped by a Russian author attending a writer's conference in London. The implication is that her complaint was sincere, but

that she would have done better to let herself enjoy it. This Russian has also been to bed with Raisa Gorbachev and enjoyed a petting session with Mrs Thatcher. I doubt whether the prime minister will be flattered by his account of the proceedings. There is a re-

Victoria Glendinning on sex with *The Times* and others

peated suggestion in this book that many women long to be mastered, used and punished, and have been misled by "societies of angry women" into resisting their true natures. *Lying Together*, you will have grasped, is a novel about obvious sexual fantasies, and the

LYING TOGETHER
By D. M. Thomas
Gollancz, £13.95

title is a pretty obvious pun. Since *The White Hotel* — which was a much better book than most critics and readers in this country thought, though not such a wonderful one as critics and readers in the United States believed — D. M. Thomas has been writing a sequence of novels based on the idea of improvisation. All novels are improvisations, but his are multiple and fragmented. His characters spin long yarns, reliving historical epi-

sodes, or pursuing subconscious desires. They are apparently supernaturally inspired or possessed by some outside force, like mediums. The technique gives endless scope for stories within stories, dreams within dreams, and the kaleidoscopic mixing of fact and fiction. It also sidesteps authorial commitment and sustained narrative. Every episode is a Russian doll with another inside it. The inspiration, too, is Russian: Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin*.

In this final novel of the quintet, the improvisers are old friends — three Russian writers and one English one, reunited at the conference. For the first time D. M. Thomas appears as himself "I'm Don Thomas." Bored by the conference, the four friends meet in each other's hotel bedrooms with a tape-recorder, and improvise stories to make a novel as they have done before, each

picking up where the other left off, like a game of Consequences.

Within the world of this novel, D. M. Thomas isn't even its author. Unlike its predecessors in the series, it has been compiled and expanded from the tapes by his three collaborators, who felt dissatisfied by the way they were represented when he was doing the writing-up. So we have the real-life D. M. Thomas writing a book, allegedly by other people, in which he is the first-person narrator.

The D. M. Thomas who they, or he, reveal or invent is given to plonking truisms when he isn't engaged in sexual fantasising. Freud is still his god. There are some sly jokes at the old monster's expense, nevertheless. Visiting Freud's house in Hampstead, the narrator feels that "the mysteriousness of sexuality lay all around", and wonders if his companions too feel "the presence of Freud's serene wisdom, his lucid intelligence. I wanted to lay on him the burden of our fractured present."

What fractures the present for him is too many women in trousers, and too many foreign persons on the Underground. Our unreliable narrator is a primitive bar-room jock. He yearns for "the England in which everyone was patently English and women en-

joyed looking different from men". There's a lot of defiant sniping at feminists and *The Guardian*, and although the narrator does not associate himself with the bullish attitudes towards rape and incest expressed by his collaborators, he has a hearty appreciation of the *Sun* newspaper, with special reference to page three and stories about knickers. Ho ho ho.

The linked improvisations concern a Russian couple who pursue their erotic marital life (fantasy number one) while she and we read a correspondence between Kraft-Ebing and a sadomasochistic servant girl (fantasy number two) and he, an improviser himself, dreams of climbing the north face of the Eiger (fantasy number three). There is also a pornographic episode concerning a glamorous, blind, female film director and various other people, variously coupled (fantasies unnumbered).

The best and funniest bits of this book are embedded in its framework. For example, a conference of film directors is taking place in the same hotel, and delegates keep wandering into the wrong group, and not noticing the difference. There are hopeful signs that Thomas's obsession with improvisations has played itself out. He mercifully allows one, which was in verse, to be accidentally wiped from the tape. The collaborators are weary critical of one another's contributions. "There's simply no unity, no consistency, no narrative thrust. All those pseudo-dreams and irrelevant letters." You can say that again. "Our 'novel' was almost certainly a write-off, but that in a sense gave a kind of freedom." Freedom to write a different kind of novel, perhaps.



They tread on my dreams

Jasper Rees

NIGHT'S LIES
By Gesualdo Bufalino
Collins Harvill, £17.95

THEY may make the best cars in Turin, glass in Venice, and priests in Rome, but it is in Sicily that the best Italian novelists drop off the conveyor belt. With the death of Leonardo Sciascia, Gesualdo Bufalino has become the island's grand old man of letters, although he only started writing relatively late in life, and only came to international attention when he won the Premio Strega, Italy's equivalent of the Booker, in 1988. The victorious novel was *Le Menzogne della Notte*, or *Night's Lies*, which now becomes his second work to find its way into English.

Night's Lies begins with a magnificent crafted red herring. Bufalino invites the reader to picture a rock in the Mediterranean, craggy, volcanic, inhospitable. Pure Dumas, the very image of Monte Cristo, it provides an unfurnished home to the sea birds, who come and go as they please, and to the inmates of an inescapable prison, who do not. The four principal prisoners — a baron, a gentlemanly poet, a soldier with a religious education, and an amorous student — bear more than a passing resemblance to Dumas's Four Musketeers.

And yet, if this is an adventure story, it is an adventure not of action but of words. Setting themselves against an oppressive royal regime, the four men have all fought for the nation's freedom,

consequently surrendering their own. Sentenced to death by decapitation, they are offered a loophole by the wily old prison governor. In his crumbling decrepitude, he remains eager to ingratiate himself with his king, and promises to reinstate life and liberty to all four if one of them will anonymously reveal the name of the leader of their conspiracy.

Given a night to mull over the offer, the quartet opt instead to kill the time until the blade kills them by narrating stories. The baron tells of how he acquired a definite identity only when his twin brother was slain in a duel; the soldier, of how he killed the rapist who spawned him in obedience to the decree of his mother. In the concluding tale, it emerges that the poet is using the form of the narrative to present an idealised image of himself. It is an old bandit, defaced beyond recognition by torture, also condemned to death and sharing the eve-of-execution cell, who spots this. From his discovery ensues a highly charged disquisition on truth, and lying, reality and imagination.

This is a novel about trusting to nothing and no one, least of all one's self. As he nears his denouement, Bufalino peels away onion layers of falsity, revealing at the core no more than a list of questions. Does this "God the Father", the name given to the leader of the conspiracy, even exist? Who is any man, other than who he chooses to say he is? Is any ideal — God, liberty, the people, justice — worth a death, when one can hold on to life by shifting identity? "We resemble all of us together, the rotting shreds of a dismembered cartulary," says the bandit. "Small-part actors, you and I are, in an endless sham. Mummies in a weird and an odious misunderstanding." (As is often the way with Italian writers, Bufalino now and then reads somewhat purply in English, the saving grace of which is that the Italian can actually be heard in Patrick Creagh's lyrical translation.)

This is a teasing, calculated, cunning novel, depicting, in the formal *Dcameron*-style structure of fables, a world utterly bereft of structure. Hence the rock-solidity of the island, a granite lump of fact in a never-ending sea of fiction. "Have I dreamt it all up?" asks the governor, a beautifully delineated character, even at the death. There is no denying credit to the man who indisputably did dream it all up.

EVER since I first wrote a review, every word that leads to others renews my tie with the world, and the feeling it may be possible to go on. Really? I paraphrase the opening of Peter Handke's *The Afternoon of a Writer*, dedicated to F. Scott Fitzgerald because the title and the subject of the difficulty of writing are taken from a collection of his stories called *Afternoon of an Author*.

My review goes on, because I am paid and wish to review this book and three others. Handke's book goes on despite his daily fear of coming to a standstill in the work, in life. Yet that is what Sam Beckett wrote about work and life — the only thing is to be done, to have done. Handke's short book does come to a sort of end with the writer going to sleep, as this review will, with the reader, I hope, awake.

A playwright of some distinction and few conclusions, Handke seems to be so involved in the process of writing that he threatens to become a performance artist. He believes, with Heraclitus, that all is flux. To write about the transient is criminal, to produce a book is presumption, more damnable than any other sin. Away from his desk, which, made into a place of righteousness by the change of one word, he feels on a walk, the experience of namelessness. Emptiness is his guiding principle. In fact, Handke's book contradicts Fitzgerald's collection, which spoke of the illusion and pain and disillusion of writing, not of its vacuum and uncertainty. *Afternoon of an Author* has inspired generations of

Slow pen of an unready writer

Andrew Sinclair

THE AFTERNOON OF A WRITER
By Peter Handke
Methuen, £11.99EXIT
A Romanian Story
By Richard Wagner
Verso, £24.95THREE KINGS
By Ah Cheng
Collins Harvill, £11.95ORANGES FROM SPAIN
By David Park
Cape, £11.95

young writers. Handke's despair will make them drop their pens.

The other books in this review were also difficult to write, because of their subject and their circumstance rather than their composition. The authors felt they had to communicate their experience. Necessity was the mother of inspiration. Richard Wagner, a Romanian of Swabian descent, retraced his steps to Timisoara, the birthplace of his country's revolution, and near his own birthplace. He has written a

preface to his autobiographical novel *Exit*, which deals with the dull persecution of minority cultures under the Ceausescu regime. A new language has taken over, in which the hated Securitate policeman are now called "terrorists". This reversal of roles has created the distance the people need to free themselves from the nightmare of the previous tyranny.

Ceausescu had built up a corrupt caste of parvenus, which was the parody of a social elite. The government had endured through fear, mistrust, opportunism, corruption, and collaboration. But could a new style arise after decades of misuse? All seems provisional. Democracy is incomprehensible, although at hand. Wagner makes his hero, Stürmer, escape from a country which was not a country and cafes which had no coffee, and then return to an incredulity about the future of liberty and the good life in such a wasted land. He conveys the dreariness of oppression better than any writer since George Orwell in 1984, and he hints at the unreality of freedom to a people unaccustomed to it.

Ah Cheng comes from a generation of educated urban Chinese youths sent to toil in the countryside, and meant to receive their

education from the peasants. There he became story-teller and an artist. In *Three Kings*, he tells of a Chess Fool, who plays blind games by the principles of the Tao and Zen; of a peasant fighting to save a huge mountain oak from the axe of progress; and of a children's teacher in a rural school full of farm animals. He suggests that the escape from oppression and poverty lies in a reversion to traditional values.

The Chess Fool learns from a refuse-collector that the way to win the game is to do nothing, and to draw an opponent into one's own strategy, never to enter into his. His mother's only gift to him is a set of blank chess pieces, suggesting that the solution of the concrete may derive from concentration on the abstract. Ah Cheng's philosophy is made earthy by a wry realism — feasts of snake-meat and rats. These are original and evocative novellas in praise of the spirit in its struggle to survive the ills of the flesh.

David Park has lived and worked most of his life in Belfast with a different kind of adversity and anguish as his neighbours. The stories in *Oranges from Spain* are of ambushes and murders, of grief and bigotry. In "Killing a Brit", a boy writes an essay on "Cruelty to Animals", then he sees a soldier shot by a sniper and yells, "Go on, die, ya bastard!", and finally he releases a caterpillar from his lunch box so that it may turn into a butterfly. In the discrepancy between actions, in the contradictions of passing thoughts, lies the art.



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Blow up mankind for laughs

HORROR

Anne Billson

THE STAND



By Stephen King
Hodder & Stoughton, £14.95

THIS must be the literary equivalent of restoring the lost 70 minutes to the scissored version of *Heaven's Gate*, except that *The Stand* wasn't a flop; far from it. It was originally published in 1979, after Stephen King obligingly cut out 400 pages of manuscript to please his accountancy department. King fans immediately fell into two camps. Some of us found it a disappointment after *The Shining* — which remains his best book. Others were transported. Ten years later, back by popular demand with the missing pages — the length of a fair-sized novel — tacked back into place, *The Stand* is... exactly the same, only bigger. The first third contains some of the scariest stuff the author has ever done: 99.4 per cent of the world's population is accidentally bumped off when a lethal strain of superflu leaks out of a research institute. "I got the chance to scrub the whole human race, and it was fun!" King wrote in his overview of the horror genre, *Danse Macabre*. The survivors polarise into good and evil camps, and here, unfortunately, the book goes downhill all the way, probably because King's forte is breaking, not making; his attempts at recreating civilisation are frankly dull, and his brave new citizens — particularly a pregnant Jewish American Princess called Fran — are a pain in the butt.

● The Waiting Room, by T. M. Wright (Gollancz, £3.99). This is the sequel to *A Manhattan Ghost Story*, one of the best postapocalyptic of the Eighties. Wright's central idea is that the city is full of ghosts, and that we frequently glimpse them, but usually assume they're living people like us. This is a great idea (and makes sense of all those snatches of everyday surrealism one sees on the streets of any big city), but the narrator of the sequel needs to have it explained to him over and over again; his old school chum is having an affair with a dead woman, and hanging around with deceased folks is bad for his health. Once the narrator stops being sceptical the story picks up for a roller-coaster nightmare climax on the road to the couple's love-nest in Vermont.

supernatural evil into consensus reality". Hartwell, a PhD in comparative literature from Columbia University, is a better editor than he is a preface writer, though his introduction to each contributor is useful. His thesis is that horror literature has developed almost entirely through the short story, and that the horror novel is a relatively recent and experimental form — debatable but interesting. Most aficionados of the genre will have already read H. P. Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu", M. R. James's "The Ash Tree", and Ray Bradbury's "The Crowd". But the selection is a sound one, and it warns one's cockles to see the Saki-esque John Collier represented as well, with the utterly charming and sinister "Evening Primrose". Bring this man back into print.

● Dark Voices — The Best from the Pan Book of Horror Stories, edited by Stephen Jones and Clarence Paget (Pan, £3.99). I'm not the only reader who grew up sneaking guilty peeks at Pan's horror paperbacks. Clive Barker and David Cronenberg are among the celebrities who have written short confessional introductions to the 13 stories collected here. Even the covers used to strike terror into my heart (I have particularly fond memories of a skull with a rat in it), and each new sliver of nastiness would curdle my blood for weeks — but I always came back for more. This 30th-anniversary selection is admirably broad in scope. The list of writers ranges from John Lennon to Ian McEwan and Stanley Elin, as well as embracing the more predictable names of King, Bradbury, and Bloch. The editors should get a pat on the back, too, for their inclusion of 30 years' worth of contributors' index.

AUTHORS

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IN THE T L S
ON JUNE 22 AND 29Interpretation and Over-interpretation
BY UMBERTO ECO

The author of *The Name of the Rose* is also a leading Italian literary scholar. In his book *The Open Work*, Umberto Eco argued that literature is largely made by its interpreters. He now thinks this idea has gone too far — not least in interpretations of his own fiction.

In the TLS on June 22 and 29 we publish two articles by Eco, exploring and satirising various forms of critical permissiveness and offering a new theory of the interaction between reader and text.

T L S
FROM YOUR NEWSAGENT EVERY FRIDAY

ARTS

BOOKS

Fair is fair

Joseph Connolly gauges the success of the London Antiquarian Book Fair

At 6pm today in the Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly, more than 100 leading booksellers from around the world will carefully pack away treasures remain unsold at the end of the three-day London Antiquarian Book Fair. It is the 31st annual bonanza for the upper class of the book trade: very little is on sale here for less than £50, and price tags of several thousand pounds are quite usual.

The dealers are nevertheless confident that, in London, the buyers will be there. Londoners themselves are not perceived to be unusually well-heeled or discriminating, but the city does seem to be inextricably linked with the antiquarian book in the minds of the international trade and collectors alike.

The term "antiquarian" is a loose one, and is becoming more so as dealers, desperate to get their hands on rare editions (for which, despite the economic climate buyers may always be found), seek to extend the brief by endeavouring to persuade the collector that whatever is available is also desirable.

The contrasts on offer this year demonstrate that one man's gem may be another man's over-priced lumber. Bob Dylan's book *Tarantula* is hardly a model of literary accomplishment, for example, yet a copy inscribed by Dylan to John and Yoko Lennon is priced at £12,500. At last year's fair, the same copy sold for £4,000 less. There are plans and maps relating to the Battle of Waterloo (£19,500), a three-decker first edition presentation copy of *Great Expectations* (£46,000), and a 9th-century example of a Koran in Eastern Kufic script on vellum, for sale at £250,000.

The major auction houses, unlike the private dealers, seem to have no difficulty at all in mounting an increasing number of sales every year, with prices regularly outstripping estimates. They maintain that in no other field of collecting has there been a comparable rise in interest and prices, except for paintings (especially Van Goghs) and the furniture of Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

According to Sarah Soames, associate director of Christie's book department: "Interest and prices have increased dramatically, even in the last 12 months." Soames quotes colour-plate books as being most in demand: a Dutch 18th-century four-volume set crammed with hand-coloured apothecary plates sold in April

for £150,000. Although this was £60,000 over estimate, the telling fact is that just one year ago, only £20,000 to £30,000 would have been expected. Soames adds: "We estimated a copy of David Roberts's *The Holy Land* at £45,000, but it fetched £95,000. It's not even that rare a book."

But because collectors now seem to be buying and hoarding, the commonplace soon becomes rare, and the rare unobtainable. Julian Rota, head of the English Literature and History department at Sotheby's, confirms this. "Collectors will not compromise on condition. But they will look at odd areas which a few years ago would not have been considered." This becomes clear if you glance at the "wanted" and "for sale" columns in the *Book and Magazine Collector*, a monthly publication aimed at the relatively impecunious amateur. It seems chock-full of nothing but *Beano* and *Rupert* books, *Giles* annuals and James Bond ephemera.

"We sold a first of Eric Ambler's *Uncommon Danger* (1937) for £3,200," Rota says. "That really knocked the book world." It certainly did: the book world was even collected. This was as nothing to the news that Stephen Spender's first little pamphlet of poems, printed by himself in 1928, was recently sold in America for £40,000, making it the most expensive 20th-century book ever. No one knew that Spender was collected either.

The new rule of thumb seems to be that if something is covetably rare and commensurately expensive, it is desirable. If it is reasonably accessible, then it must be in unusually fine condition. If it is neither of these, forget it.

However, in the light of collectors' high spending and increasingly discerning acquisitiveness, it is fanciful to wonder whether the antiquarian book trade might simply run out of the best things to sell? This seems improbable. Certainly a freer availability of sought-after rarities can, paradoxically, only come about after the unthinkable happens: a collapse in the market, which would make the hugely desirable much less so. This, unfortunately, says very little about the beauty and quality of rare books. However, of the attitudes of present-day collectors it speaks volumes.

● The 31st Antiquarian Book Fair's final day is today at the Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly, London W1. 11am-6pm.

CRITIC'S CHOICE: LITERATURE

ANNE STEVENSON AND HUGO WILLIAMS: Stevenson is a poet at the height of her powers. She writes poems full of informed curiosity with a sensuous pleasure of the natural world. *The Other House* is her first new collection since 1985. Williams has the ability to narrate ordinary events into the extraordinary. The writing is simple and direct and draws extensively on his own experiences. Poetry Society, 21 East's Court Square, London SW5 (071-373 7861), tonight, 7.30pm £2.50 (£2), £1.25 members.

APPLES AND SNAKES: This, the sixth Midsummer Poetry Festival, presents a range of performance poetry. Much of the work is unabashed entertainment, flavoured with satire. It seeks to rekindle interest in the art of aural poetry and story-telling traditions, still considered important to many cultures in Britain. The line-up includes Sister Nefiti, Brother Nyl, Marsha Prescott and Patience Agbabi. St Martin's Market Theatre, Trafalgar Square, London WC2 (081-690 9368), Sat. 2.30-5.30pm, free.

EDWIN BROCK AND MARTYN CRUCEFLEX: Enitharmon Press, one of Britain's more successful small presses, celebrates its 21st anniversary with this reading. Cruceflex is an incisive new voice who won an Eric Gregory Award in 1984. His poems engage strongly and the rhythms of his phrases are bold. His first collection, *Beneath Tremendous Rain*, is due to be published later this year. The Voice Box, Level 5, Festival Hall, London SE1 (071-926 8800), Tues. 7.30pm, £2.50, £1.50.

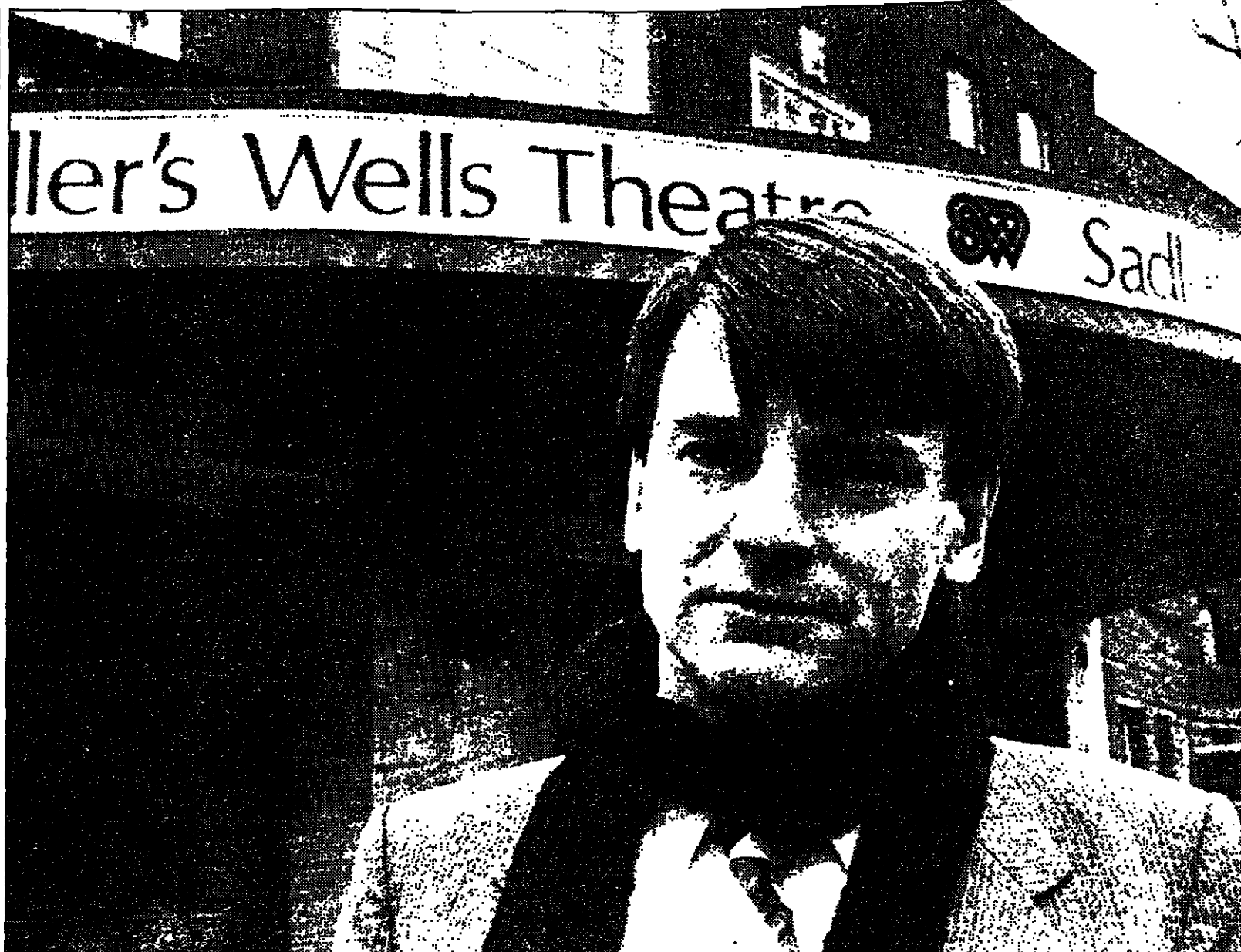
CONTEMPORARY POETS: PORTRAITS BY PETER EDWARDS: Tomorrow, the artist talks about his exhibition, a line

and revealing show, which finishes at the weekend. Craig Raine gives the final reading in conjunction with this exhibition. Raine, initiator of the so-called "Marian" poetry of the early Eighties, has a strong popular following, although his attempts at futuristic verse seem destined to become dated. Perhaps his recently released collection of literary essays, *Haydn and the Voice Trumpet*, will restore his influence. (Sat) National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2 (071-306 0055), tomorrow, 1.10pm, Sat. 3pm, free.

THE LEEDS FESTIVAL AND SMALL PRESS FAIR: A welcome occasion to sample the richness and diversity of publications from British independent presses. There will be exhibitions, book launches and readings throughout the weekend. Readings from Craig Raine (see comment above) (Mon, 8pm) and Debbi Chatterjee (Wed, 8pm). Chatterjee, a past winner of the Peterloo Competition's Afro-Caribbean/Asian section and her most recent publication, *Barbed Lines*, marks her out as a compelling new voice. Exhibition: The Bishopsgate Venue, 1 Bishopsgate Street, Leeds. Sat-Sun, free. Readings held at: Leeds Grammar School Theatre, Moor Lane (Mon); The Hindu Temple, Alexandra Road, Leeds (Wed). Festival information: 0532 429887.

THE HARD EDGE CLUB: Dinah Livingstone, always worth hearing, alongside Lindsay McRae, a one-time member of Angels of Fire. Compiling this ball are the producer, John Anstiss and director, Les Tate. The Red Lion (upstairs), 20 Great Windmill Street, London W1 (071-732 4007), Mon. 8.30pm, £2.50.

CRIS CREEK



Stephen Remington, director of Sadler's Wells Theatre: "Whatever we do to the present building will be a compromise"

DANCE

The Wells must die, to live

Debra Craine reports on plans for a showcase dance auditorium for London, which imply demolition of one of our most historic theatres

The birthplace of the Royal Ballet and English National Opera is making its most ambitious move yet in its long-running campaign to improve its outdated facilities and confirm its place as a national centre for dance. But if the plans by Sadler's Wells go ahead, one of London's most historic theatres will be demolished.

At a joint news conference yesterday, Sadler's Wells and Thames Water announced three proposals for future use of the privatised water board's site, which is adjacent to the north London theatre. Two of the proposals include plans to create a new theatre as part of an overall commercial and residential development.

Sadler's Wells director, Stephen Remington, says: "A new theatre would secure the heritage of Sadler's Wells for the indefinite future and enable us to pursue policies we have been trying to pursue in the inadequate facilities we now have."

During the past 20 years, Sadler's Wells has built a reputation for innovation in its programming, particularly in the presentation of British and foreign dance companies. It is this reputation that Remington has been trying to protect with his various proposals for the building. Even when it was originally constructed, the theatre was criticised for its limitations, including a cramped stage, inadequate backstage facilities, overcrowded public areas, and uncomfortable seating in the 1,500-seat auditorium.

Previous attempts at renovation have met with fund-raising problems and as all arts organisations are well aware, there is not a lot of money - either private or public - available to the arts in the current economic climate. Remington sees the partnership with Thames Water as "certainly the most exciting opportunity that's ever come our way."

One of the proposals calls for a new Sadler's Wells Theatre to be built within the old water board headquarters, retaining the outer structure and plugging into the interior. But Remington favours the second proposal which would see the creation of a purpose-built theatre and dance centre, erected on the site of the headquarters building.

Both proposals involve the demolition of the existing theatre building, opened in 1931 under the auspices of Lilian Baylis. The birthplace of the first permanent opera and ballet

companies in Britain, and home to stars such as Alicia Markova, Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann, its loss would be mourned by some.

"There will be a tinge of sadness when it goes," says Remington. "Wonderful things happened here, some great companies were born here, there have been terrific performances here. But people will recognise with their heads the need and value of this change, even if in their hearts they will be sad." Besides, he continues, "Whatever we do to the present building will be a compromise."

Behind Remington's dream of a new Sadler's Wells lies the reality that there have been many other schemes to construct a purpose-built dance house for London. So far, at least, none has amounted to more than just another missed opportunity.

That London needs a theatre for dance is not an issue. The Arts Council, various arts committees and foreign dance companies wanting to visit London have been complaining about a lack of proper venues for years. They point out that London stands alone among major international capitals in not having the right kind of theatres for dance.

Nor is it only foreign companies who suffer. English National Ballet is hampered by a lack of sufficient performing space, with its showcase London seasons squeezed into two weeks at the Coliseum (home to English National Opera), and several more weeks at the Royal Festival Hall, where the choice of repertoire is limited by the fact that the South Bank facility is not a traditional proscenium arch theatre.

There is also the question of where the Royal Ballet will go when Covent Garden closes in late 1993 for major renovations. Even after they return, according to the Royal Ballet's administrative director, Anthony Russell-Roberts: "We would very much like to be part of a national house for dance and have black seasons there outside the Opera House."

Previous attempts to build a dance theatre have included an Entertainment Corporation proposal for the County Hall development on the

South Bank, which was removed from that scheme at an early stage. The Entertainment Corporation, however, is not giving up. Its chairman, Peter Brightman, says "we reckon we will have our own dance theatre within 18 months."

Three inner London sites are under consideration for this proposed 3,500-seat theatre: Brightman says he hopes to make a firm announcement within the next few months about what would be the biggest of the proposed dance houses, designed to house the largest-scale dance and opera companies on their London visits - companies such as New York City Ballet, La Scala and the Bolshoi and Kirov companies.

"We are absolutely determined to have a theatre," says Brightman. "I wish Sadler's Wells every success but my own feeling is that all those theatres are too small."

In another scheme, Stephen Hetherington, head of Hetherington Seelig, the international arts administration and management business, headed a consortium which wanted to buy and refurbish the Lyceum Theatre in the Strand with £12 million linked to Sun Moon's Unification Church. That plan fell apart after the London Residual Body decided to sell the Lyceum to Brent Walker, although Russell-Roberts believes the Lyceum should not be written off yet as an option.

Hetherington has been trying to build a new theatre for opera and ballet for almost a decade. Despite setbacks, such as the much-publicised Lyceum saga, he is eager to keep on fighting. He is also one step ahead of Sadler's Wells, having acquired the option on a vacant site behind Waterloo Station, close to the South Bank arts complex. He envisages a 2,500-seat receiving theatre which could accommodate major opera and dance companies, and a planning application will be submitted to Lambeth this summer.

Funding for his theatre, estimated to cost at least £30 million, is said to be about 60 to 70 percent committed, and Hetherington is reasonably confident that financing will be totally secured. He is not so confident about the other

Stephen's project, although he supports it wholeheartedly.

"It's hard to see how Stephen [Remington] could actually do it, but if I could help him I would," says Hetherington. "Yes, it will be some competition. But I see no problem there. A little bit of competition will benefit the public and the need is so great that two theatres alone may not be enough to satisfy it."

For his part, Remington is not worried that other proposals for a London dance house will adversely affect his chances of success. "There's no problem there," he says. "We are in friendly competition with each other, but constructive competition feeds theatre. And if all three theatres happen, well, wow, what a bonanza!"

He describes the proposed new Sadler's Wells, with a flexible seating capacity of 1,500-2,200, as a "totally integrated project, the kind of deal this government is asking us to do." Financing would depend on the profitability of the surrounding office development and, according to Remington, "we will not proceed with construction unless the new theatre can be paid for out of the planning gain implied by the level of office development."

The Sadler's Wells plans are in their infancy compared to projects such as Hetherington's, and their feasibility will depend on the reaction of the local community in Islington, where residents' groups have already raised objections to development of the Thames Water property. In any event, construction of a new theatre could not begin until 1992 when the water board leaves its offices on the site.

Carole McPhee, general administrator of English National Ballet, is one of those hoping a dance theatre will finally happen after a decade of discussion. "This company desperately needs somewhere it could build audiences from," she says. "A new theatre would give this company a stability it has never really enjoyed, as well as allowing us to build an ongoing and faithful audience, and serve our existing audience in a better way by giving them a wider range of what this company can do."

"Look, I left London in 1977 to go to Australia and between then and 1985, three beautiful theatres were built in Australia," she adds. "I came back to London in 1985 and they were still saying the same things about how London needs a theatre for dance. It was like I'd never been away!"

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- JUNE
- CROCODILE DUNDEE II
- BARFLY
- BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY
- BABY BOOM
- BLIND DATE
- LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
- ROXANNE
- SPACEBALLS
- HAIRSPRAY
- LA BAMBA
- PRINCE: SIGN O' THE TIMES
- THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS
- MOONSTRUCK
- POLTERGEIST III
- ROCKY IV
- TO LIVE AND DIE IN LA
- BEVERLY HILLS COP II
- KARATE KID II
- WHITE NIGHTS
- THE MOLLY MAGUIRES
- BLUE MOVIES
- MY DEMON LOVER
- THE WOO WOO KID
- AMARCORD
- THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA
- PAL JOEY
- UNMAN WITTERING AND ZIGO
- JOYRIDERS
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ARTS

CINEMA

Brotherly devotion

David Robinson reviews the new releases, including Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo*, *Fools of Fortune*, *Stanley and Iris*, *Limit Up*, *Revenge* and *The Fourth War*

Few men did more to enlarge our vision than Vincent van Gogh. None of them was ever so ill-rewarded in his lifetime.

Van Gogh's short life was an endless battle with conscience, with the demands of his art, with sickness, mental instability, poverty and malnutrition.

Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo* (15, Everyman, Screen on the Green) opens with a vivid illustration: video recordings of the recent sale of *Sunflowers* for £22.5 million are intercut with dramatised scenes of Van Gogh (Tim Roth), lying sick in his wretched studio.

Altman's interest (see interview, below) is in the extraordinary, touching devotion of Vincent's younger brother, who encouraged and supported him as best his own slight resources allowed. Without Theo the prolific output of Vincent's last ten years, and particularly the final months (he produced 70 canvases in the last 70 days of his life) would never have existed. Nor would the autobiographical revelation of Vincent's voluminous correspondence with Theo, which supplied another biographical film, Paul Cox's 1988 *Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh*.

Theo's devotion is the film's main focus. Tim Roth's Vincent is naturalistic, meticulously studied, even resembling the self-portraits. The film, though, covers the period when the painter was retreating more and more into the privacy of madness, where (without the confessional of the letters) it is hard to follow him.

While Roth's Vincent is elusive, Paul Rhys's Theo is much more open and accessible. He is a gentle young man, overwhelmed by money problems, by the difficulty of keeping patience with the perverse genius, by domestic problems, by guilt over the syphilis that wrecked both brothers.

Altman's film is loving, careful, tastefully staged (designed by Altman's son Stephen; photographed with Vermeer lighting by Jean Lepine) and finally a trifle dull. The paintings are carefully reproduced and studied and cherished; but there is none of the sheer joy and excitement that Kurosawa generates in the curious little Van Gogh episode in *Dreams*.

Perhaps it is the archetypal New European film, with its multinational production credits and cast (French, English, Dutch); its comparative modesty of means offset by thoughtful use of locations, design, script. The film's length (140 minutes) and episodic character (the first third is dominated by Vincent's affair with the prostitute Sien Hoornik; the second by Theo's concern; the third and best by Vincent's descent to madness and death) suggest that it was designed, either sooner or later, to do double service as a television mini-series.

Back in Ireland, after the less than happy Hollywood adventures of *Stars and Bars* and *The January Man*, Pat O'Connor has adapted William Trevor's *Fools of Fortune* (15, Curzon, West End), which suits his taste for rural period pieces.

Fools of Fortune is set in a village near the borders, between the two World Wars. Condensed into film, the story has something about it of a Victorian melodramatic novel. The political upheavals provide the pretext rather than a background for the story. A peaceful middle-class family are massacred by the Black-and-Tans.

The drama is what happens in the aftermath to the only survivors, the mother (Julie Christie) and son (Iain Glen).

Suspense is artificially but effectively sustained by structuring the film in flashbacks from a remote island shack where Glen is hiding out, for reasons which are only gradually revealed in the course of the film.

The film is always good looking, though swamped by an over-weighted score by Hans Zimmer. O'Connor draws advantageously on the inexhaustible stock of fine Irish character actors (John Kavanagh, Frankie McCafferty, Niamh Cusack). The principals, though, suffer from lack of direction. In particular Iain Glen, who possesses resources and a naked sensitivity uncommon in young British actors, is allowed to overplay uncharacteristically.

Martin Ritt's record as a radical intellectual goes back to pre-war progressive New York Theatre and includes a period under the shadow of the McCarthyist blacklist. His social conscience still intact, he doggedly continues to

celebrate America's blue-collar class in films such as *The Molly Maguires*, *Conrack* and *Norma Rae*.

Stanley and Iris (15, Empire 1) is set in a fictional, depressed mid-Western town. *Iris* (Jane Fonda) works on the production line of a bakery where Stanley (Robert de Niro) serves in the canteen. *Iris* is a recent widow, struggling to keep together a household that includes her small son, her unwelcome pregnant daughter and her sister, battling miserably with a workless husband. Yet *Iris* still has spirit enough to take on Stanley's problem, which is illiteracy.

The film is open pamphletizing for the 20 per cent of the US population which is illiterate. De Niro, recently seen at his worst in *We're No Angels*, gives a diligently studied performance, catching the wretchedness and embarrassment of an intelligent, personable man unable to read street signs or apply for a driver's licence. Playing a working woman, Jane Fonda displays a somewhat self-conscious sense of mission.

Harriet Frank and Irving Ravetch, who have written some of Ritt's best scripts (*The Long Hot Summer*, *Hud*, *Norma Rae*) let him down here, with contrivances of plot and sentiment gravely at odds with the realist and propagandist intentions.

Scripted and directed — with enthusiasm, at least — by Richard Marinn, *Limit Up* (12, Cannons Haymarket, Oxford Street) is one of those bright ideas that should have been abandoned at an early stage. Again, the setting is realistic, the "soybean pit" of the Chicago grain market. Over-perky Nancy Allen battles to become a trader in the pit (in real life there is just one such female trader), against the resistance of deep-rooted male chauvinism.

The bad idea is to make it a Faust story, with a black female Memphisophile (Danitra Vance). From bad it goes to worse, with an ending in which everyone changes character to ensure a heart-warming fade-out that seems far from the realities of the milieu.

The first moral lesson of *Revenge* (18, Odeon Leicester Square) is to beware of making friends with murderous Mexican power-brokers. The second is that, once that mistake is made, it is better not to commit adultery with their wives.

Kevin Costner, as a clean-cut Vietnam veteran and retired Navy pilot, commits both errors, and lands everyone in a great deal of trouble, not least the audience called upon to sit through two hours of over-heated Mexican melodrama.

The script, based on a novella by Jim Harrison, who co-wrote the film with Jeffrey Fiskin, is the kind that takes characters off the shelf, uses them for the odd scene and then forgets them. It is directed by Tony Scott (who had better luck at the box office with *Top Gun* and *Beverly Hills Cop II*), with an air that no expense has been spared. The monolithic Anthony Quinn (who, incidentally, was Gauguin to Kirk Douglas's Van Gogh in *Lust for Life*, 34 years ago) emerges with most credit from the affair.

The Fourth War (15, Cannons Shaftesbury Avenue, Panton Street) is an antiquated Cold War fable, directed by John Frankenheimer, again from a novel, by Stephen Peters. Two confronting border posts between West Germany and Czechoslovakia are commanded by a hawkish Vietnam veteran (Roy Scheider) and a Soviet colonel with brutal ways and very nasty looks (Jurgen Prochnow). This demented couple take to making destructive sorties across the border.

Attempts at comic relief — Scheider singing a bawdy cockney soldiers' song or teaching young Russian hostages to sing "Happy Birthday to You" — merely add to the absurdity of the proceedings. The detached, sardonic sanity of Harry Dean Stanton as GOC provides some consolation.

Stanton has the best line in the picture, borrowed from Albert Einstein: "I do not know with what weapons the Third World War will be fought; but the Fourth will be fought with stones."

Reviews of Peter Yates's thriller about a man wrongfully imprisoned, *An Innocent Man* (18, Odeon West End) and Robert M. Young's recreation of the true story of a Greek prize-fighter in Auschwitz, *Triumph of the Spirit* (15, Odeon Mezzanine) will be included in next week's column.



Bernadette (Natalie Wright, centre) with fellow cast members William Poole and Meredith Braun

THEATRE

Miraculous in itself?

Staging new plays in the West End is a risky business. Michael Frayn's *Look Look* closed in May at the Aldwych after less than a month's run. The proportion of flops among West End musicals is even greater. Earlier this year, Trevor Nunn's latest production, *The Baker's Wife*, closed after only six weeks, with losses running into millions of pounds. More recently, veteran producer Harold Fielding had to go into liquidation after the failure of the Petula Clark musical *Someone Like You*, which closed after five weeks. The £3 million musical *King* was closed by its Swiss producers after the show opened to frosty reviews.

Undaunted, the businessman-turned-producer William Fonf, this week launches *Bernadette*, a new musical based on the story of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes. He is convinced that he has a hit on his hands. At the moment, he is in a minority.

"Musicals have got themselves in a rut; they are not relying on the music any more, whereas we have 27 individual song numbers," says Fonf. "And although *Bernadette* is the title role, she is not the main part, she is really just the catalyst. Dramatically, that has worked in the past; in *Jesus Christ Superstar* it was Judas who had the strong part, not Jesus Christ."

The plot concerns Bernadette Soubirous, a young peasant girl from Lourdes who, in 1858, claimed to have had visions of a beautiful lady, later interpreted to be the Virgin Mary. A spring appears at the appropriate spot, and miraculous healing is reported. But before these events give credence to Bernadette's claims, she is ridiculed and threatened with prison. There is a tear-jerking sub-plot: a love story about a prostitute and a young man who is seriously ill.

Bernadette was written by a husband and wife team, Gwyn and Maureen Hughes, who teach at the Laing Theatre Arts School in Ipswich and have never attempted such a project before. The story of their struggle to have their musical premiered in London is high drama in itself.

The two met in Shrewsbury,

A musical about

St Bernadette of

Lourdes opens in

London tonight.

Ljubima Woods tells

the story behind its

creation and its

journey to West

End production

Yorkshire, where Maureen was teaching English and Gwyn was a piano-tuner. Gwyn has been writing music since he was a child. After marrying in 1978, they began writing their own songs for a full-scale musical of Dickens's *David Copperfield*. They toured American universities, where they were given standing ovations.

After a visit to Lourdes, which attracts five million pilgrims every year, they decided that the story of Bernadette was a natural for a musical. Underpinned by the rejection of numerous West End producers over the years, the Hughes persevered, resisting all temptation to stage *Bernadette* first in the provinces. To the astonishment of relatives and friends, they sold most of their possessions and moved south, because they were told that to do a musical in the West End they had to live near London.

About a year ago, they approached William Fonf, who had been working out of Pinewood Studios, running Willie's Wheels, a transport company providing back-up to film and television location work all over Europe and North Africa. He heard the score for *Bernadette*, was impressed by its quality and immediately agreed to take over the production and the financial arrangements. The main problem was, of course, raising the money.

"In the wake of the general public's enthusiasm for small shareholders, it occurred to me that we could actually issue a prospectus ourselves, just like the

water board does," Fonf said.

It took him several months with legal advisers and accountants to form a public limited company, called Bernadette PLC, and to formulate a document that could stand up "legally, honestly and attractively" to the public. But Fonf also knew that the only way to encourage the public to invest in a musical was to publicize the music, so some of the songs were recorded with a small orchestra and student singers. Each of the 4,000 prospectuses sent out last September was accompanied by a demo tape and, as a result, about 2,000 decided to invest in what is now billed as "The People's Musical". The minimum stake was £100, but there is one investor with £20,000.

The prospectus warned that the repayment of investment would depend on the show's success. But the company said that if it did prove successful, investors would get back their £100 after a 37-week run, plus a dividend. It also advised that anyone who had put £500 into the first West End production of *Cats* would have received £1,000 a year for the last eight years. Or could Bernadette's investors end up like the 23 "angels" of Frayn's *Look Look*, who are waving a collective goodbye to £250,000? The investors have contributed just over half of the £1 million necessary to stage the show. Fonf is banking on its success by personally underwriting the rest of the money.

Shareholders are being given two weeks' advantage in booking tickets and will be entitled to discounts, which will guarantee some audience. But they alone will not guarantee the show's long-term success.

At 50 per cent capacity, with a cast of 40 and a 21-strong orchestra, it should be making a healthy enough profit to survive, but pulling 1,000 paying customers for any show will be difficult to sustain over a long period. Yet the story of *Bernadette* may prove compelling; it may well capture the attention and fire the imagination simply on merit.

● *Bernadette* opens tonight at 7pm at the Dominion, Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (071-580 9562)

CRITIC'S CHOICE: VIDEO

A weekly selection of films recently released on video. The year refers to the date of first release, or in the case of television films, of first broadcast.

LORD OF THE FLIES (Warner, PG): Next week, the new film of William Golding's fable about stranded schoolboys in his town. This week, Peter Brook's old one (1963) slips out on video. It has to be said it is awkward, but haunting, with some memorable child performances.

MR NORTH (RCA/Columbia, PG): Flawed version of Thornton Wilder's whimsical novel about a personable young man in the 1920s who takes Newport, Rhode Island, society by storm. Nothing quite as good, but the cast is notable (Robert Redford, Lauren Bacall), and the film's disposition civilised. 1989.

PSYCH-OUT (RCA/Columbia, 18): Enjoyable mish-mash of trippy clichés, pegged to a tenuous plot about a deaf runaway (Susan Strasberg) looking for her missing brother. The awesome sights include "far-out" would-be psychedelic camerawork and a porytated Jack Nicholson leading a rock band. 1968.

TEX AVERY SCREWBALL CLASSICS 2 (MGM/UA, U): More raucous cartoons made in the Forties and early Fifties by the master of zany animation, including *Red Hot Riding Hood*, *One Ham's Family* and *Big Heat- Waits*.

THREE SISTERS (Warner, U): Laurence Olivier, Joan Plowright and Alan Bates are among those recreating the National Theatre's 1967 production of the Chekhov play. Nobly acted, though it is far less ambitious or successful than Olivier's earlier ventures into filmed theatre. 1970.

THE FINAL TEST (Odyssey, U): This is a fragrant Terence Rattigan tale of a cricketer's last game, dingly produced, and the cast's real cricketers act like sore thumbs. It is full of interest, though, for students of Fifties British mores. With Jack Warner and Robert Morley. 1953.

THE GIRL IN A SWING (Futuristic, 18): Polished semi-erotic thriller carved from Richard Adams's warty novel about an antiques dealer and his new German wife, weighed down with mysterious guilt. With Meg Tilly, Rupert Frazer. 1989.

GEOFF BROWN

Work of challenge

Robert Altman talks to John Marriott about *Vincent and Theo*, which is reviewed above

Director Robert Altman rarely gives cause for surprise. A respected American maverick with interests as broad as his expensive manner, he has peppered his films with his eclecticism and also changed style to suit the occasion. The big-screen exuberance of *Nashville* and theatrical confinements of *Streamers* and *Secret Honor* spring from a man whose daring points accusingly at an industry stymied by dull conservatism and clip-board executives.

Thus, his adoption of Vincent van Gogh caused no one to blink. Despite the director's fascination with the artist, and his amused confession that he himself is "a recreational painter", the idea for *Vincent and Theo* was not his. "I was pestered by Ludi Boeken, my producer. I read the script and thought it would all be sacrosanct — you know, one of those films about a famous painter that would be uphill all the way. Even with the creative freedom that I allow myself, I didn't give in until I began to view it as a challenge."

Conceived at first as a four-hour mini-series, *Vincent and Theo* also became a full-scale cinema outing at Altman's insistence. The British film-makers who met Mrs Thatcher last Friday ought to heed Altman's pithy remark that "So much gets lost on the small screen. Big feelings need big presentation." His decision has led to his best American audience previews since *M*A*S*H*.

Central to Altman's search for emotional truth is Tim Roth who, as the anxiously obsessive Van Gogh, veers capably and disturbingly from weepy introspection to sudden anger, and helps separate *Vincent and Theo* from those biopics which replace full characterisation with peripheral detail.

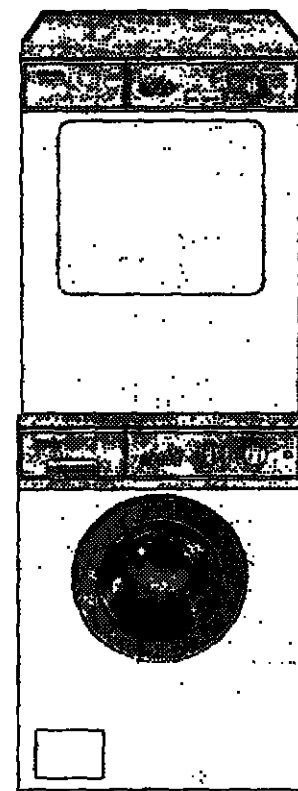
Altman, a director whose films in themselves are often creative discussions, couches his enthu-

siasm in a deadpan drawl: "Yeah, Tim's great, one of your most extraordinary young actors. I wanted British actors because I feel American accents interfere with an audience's understanding. Tim gets the right intonation across. "I was, after all, making a picture about an obscure failure, not a famous painter. I was trying to show a poor guy in a room who wasn't a particularly good draughtsman and didn't choose original subjects. I wanted simplicity." Unrelated to more self-conscious film biographies, *Vincent and Theo* homes in on "a man who was living a day-to-day life. He didn't realise the significance of what he was doing."

Unlike Roth, whom Altman cast at the eleventh hour, Paul Rhys, who brings the right mix of nervous innocence and adult concern to the role of Theo, was signed up at an early stage. "I'm delighted with Paul," Altman said. "In fact, I'm always pleased with my actors. They turn up on set and I say, 'What have you got for me today? Show me and I'll film it.' "I always carry a film in my head and so reduce editing to a minimum," he offers dryly. "I never storyboard, and let the actors do all the work. I just stay out of the way and give them the freedom to become those characters."

With a relaxed warmth which often seems at odds with his flat tones, Altman remains calm when discussing the "irrational" Italian producer who caused him to abandon *Rossini*, *Rossini* (his Fellini-style comedy about the composer) and does not deliver a one-hour sales pitch when conversation turns to *La Strada*, his current project. Culled from the works of Raymond Carver, it is, he believes, infused with the echoes and moods of *Vincent and Theo*.

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REVIEWS

Reign of the purple Prince

ROCK

Prince
Wembley Arena

PRINCE'S claim on rock's Man of the Eighties award was not hindered by the timely announcement of these English dates at the end of last year, when the pundits were compiling their Best of the Decade lists. Yet the air of casual triumphalism that has overtaken this visit, with its record-breaking 15-night stand at Wembley, has deflected attention from the disappointment of last year's *Batman* soundtrack, a nondescript affair which nevertheless gave Prince some much-needed commercial success thanks to the hype surrounding the film.

With neither the new material nor, seemingly, the will to compete with his landmark *Lovesexy* romp of 1988, Prince has settled this time around for a "back to basics" stage show, cheekily entitled *The Love Symbol Album*. But "basic" for a showman such as Prince still entails a display of outrageous flamboyance. He costumed and, as the walls shook to a rumbling bass resonance and 12,000 pairs of eyes struggled to pick out his slender figure amid a bombardment of flashing lights and smoke, his name was spelled out in 6ft letters.

The opening sequence segued "The Future", "1999" and "Housequake" into a continuous 15-minute disco-funk workout,



Not-so-basic: Prince delivering his own brand of outrageous flamboyance at Wembley

reminiscent in spirit of the neo-James-Brown soul revue shows which he mounted here in 1986. Three male dancers engaged in split-second dance routines that looked at times like a hyperactive aerobics class, while Prince cavorted back and forth, his new little bush of a beard and flowing blow-dried bouffant clearly visible on the two monitor screens.

The ridiculously coquettish falsetto of "Kiss" and a speeded-up arrangement of "Alphabet St." were poorly served by a murky

and overbearing sound balance. An abridged version of "Purple Rain", replete with ringing, hi-tech guitar solo, suited the conditions better, but the bombast seemed odd. The only new song, a slow bluesy shuffle called "A Question of U", was the cue for some gratuitous bawdy-punky with the microphone stand, a tedious, passé routine that added nothing to the song. He pulled out all the stops for his version of "Nothing Compares 2 U", with- ing on top of the piano and

disappearing on top of a giant heart, but he lacked the emotive power which Sinead O'Connor has invested in the song. After "Bat Dance" there was a good half-hour of encores - including "Partyman" and a version of Otis Redding's "Respect" - and several costume changes. But for all the energy, precision and flair, there was a lingering feeling that here is an artist who, despite all the mystery and talent, may have begun to mark time.

DAVID SINCLAIR

THEATRE
Twelfth Night
Holland Park

THE elegant canopy that shelters the Holland Park Open Air Theatre seems to have been erected directly in the flight path of London's fly-flying pigeon squadron. Fortunately, the fizzle on stage is such that the aeronautics merely add to the enjoyment of a refreshing, if flawed, production.

Peter Benedict has set the play in a Thirties film studio, with Orsino (Mark Greenstreet) a noisy, narcissistic director, and Olivia (Roxana Mohr) a vampish prima donna with a gaze that smoulders more than her torn-silk voice. It is not always clear what some of the other characters are doing in "Myria Studios", but a vague equation between mislead- ing affections and the shaggy- plain world of Hollywood prevents the setting from seeming utterly gratuitous.

More controversially, the part of Viola (the young shipwreckee who disguises herself as a man) is played by a male actor (William Conacher), who also plays her twin brother. Shakespeare did use

boys in women's roles, but here, instead of adding an extra frisson of irony to Viola's situation, the use of a man detracts from its inherent pathos and comedy. As a woman, "she" draws like a camp viper in drag. In her male guise, Viola is still more coo, efflessly slouching across the stage. A one-actor Viola/Sebastian may be symbolically right-on, but dramatically it is disastrous, replacing poignancy with confusion.

The heart of the production is suspect, then, but Dominic Gray's bespectacled Feste, with a mixture of modesty and tomfoolery as convincing as his soft-shoe shuffle, proves an effective pacemaker. On its outskirts, the production is meticulously polished and exuberantly convincing. Gregory Cox endows Sir Toby with a roughness which is well matched by George Pennoth's Sir Andrew, a whining pansy with just enough sap left in him to trip out a Charleston, while Peter Benedict's sulphuric Malvolio scowls as if engaged in an unending hunt for laxatives.

Admittedly, a sticky layer of ingenuity obscures much that is significant in the play, but this is not a pretentious production. Rather, it is a cheeky one, and thoroughly enjoyable for being so.

MICHAEL WRIGHT

DANCE
Cumbre Flamenca
Sadler's Wells

MUCH of the fervour of flamenco courses through the programme brought by the small but highly distinctive Andalusian troupe whose third London season in two years had early morning queues for tickets before the opening performance. All five dancers and certainly some of the eight musicians (singers and guitarists) have been on one or other of the previous visits, and between them they generated an energetic, infectious exuberance.

The format is as before, with traditional costumes on a stage bare except for chairs and microphones for the musicians at the back, and only a lighting design (Felipe Rodriguez) to colour the mood in each number. The troupe comes together at the beginning and end of the first part, and for a jubilant final *buleria* which lights up their features.

Otherwise a scowl or a grimace is often the predominant expression as each dancer in turn presents a particular dance best suited to him or her. For the

intoxicating La Chana, some way past her first youth, it is the passionate *alegrías*, elaborate patterns of intricate, rattling footwork as the dance takes increasing possession of her rhythmically transformed limbs and body and, one imagines, her soul.

The loose-limbed, sometimes almost ungainly steps of Juana Amaya contrast with the severe dignity of Angela Granados, whose two metres of trailing flourishes encircle a centre of bodily calm and intense feeling. Of the two men, the taller Antonio Canales preserves a physical elegance to mask his strength of movement, but the dynamic Cristóbal Reyes of the flashing eyes and striking feet now seems to have become more concerned with effect than content.

Did memory play false, or was the music more sentimentalised than their first visit here? Certainly the guitars and some of the vocalising were rooted in strophic folk-melody more often than the microtonalulations of *cante jondo*, but the expertise and instinct for rhythm never failed. They are full partners with the dancers, cajoling them into a vigorous reciprocity that gives the entertainment its tautness of style.

NOEL GOODWIN

TELEVISION

HAVING created the perfect parody of a literary lecture some 20 years ago in a classic school play called *40 Years On*, Alan Bennett now finds himself trying to give a whole series of real ones without provoking too many irreverent titters from the back of the viewing class. True, Tony Cash's films for *Poetry in Motion* (Channel 4) do look uneasily like an early mockery of the Open University, with a single, under-budgeted camera desperate to photograph anything ever mentioned by a poet. Last night we got lingering shots of the buffet at Baker Street tube station to illustrate John Betjeman in Metro-land, presumably because Cash had been unable to afford even the repeat rights of the super-

lative documentary of that title. But at the heart of *Poetry in Motion* is Bennett himself, the non-poet in no motion but stationed behind a lectern from where he issues random domestic sketches of the famously poetic dead. Thus far, we have had A.E. Housman descended from a long line of maiden aunts and Thomas Hardy demanding a wife who would do the buttering up as well as the washing up.

Bennett's Betjeman was a delightful radio gossip, inadequately photographed. He noted Betjeman's parentage of Victoria Wood and Barry Humphries but forgot his own quite brilliant 1960s mockeries of the Laureate. He did recall the memorable occasion when Sir John went to David Cecil lecture on the Pleasures of Reading, convinced it would be an architectural survey

of the Berkshire city. I suppose we were lucky not to get a close-up of Joan Hunter-Dunn's tennis racket.

If *Poetry in Motion* is singularly under-photographed, last night's BBC 1 *Frontiers* was equally desperately over-written. A Mexican-American writer, Richard Rodriguez, took us from Tijuana over the frontier to San Diego by way of Pseudo's Corner, in an archly self-conscious script which solemnly described a waitress shuffling scrambled eggs over a breakfast counter as "the priestess of the short order, administering all the consolations of America".

Suspended between two cultures, caught between memory and desire (you supply the cliché and I'll get the immigrant crowd shots), this was a frontier which closed almost as soon as it opened, if only because its makers could

not remember why it had been there in the first place.

Instead of examining border territory, or looking at how a frontier divides the people who live on it as well as those who live across it, the producer Gerry Troyna merely allowed Rodriguez to wander aimlessly around Los Angeles, gawping at Britt Ekland and Caddy Broccoli, only occasionally dragging himself back to some sort of vague thesis about Mexicans in a California that once was theirs by geographic right.

As a personal road-movie travogue, it had a kind of aimless, sun-baked curiosity, but what the film was doing in a hitherto tightly framed and cogently argued series remains unexplained. I have seen Mexican wrought-iron screens rather less wrought than the writing here.

SHERIDAN MORLEY

NEW RELEASES

THE INTRUDER (PG): Roger Corman's punchy drama from 1961 about a racist (William Shatner) living up trouble down South. Plus Walter's mystery. (Dolby 2) on release in new prints. ICA Cinema (071-930 3697).

MISS FIRECRACKER (PG): Engaging version of Beth Henley's play about a teeny Missouri miss (Holly Hunter) determined to enter the local talent contest. With Mary McCormack, Tim Robbins, and Charles Hallahan. (071-930 3697).

MUSIC BOX (15): Costa-Gavras's enigmatic, shocking drama about a Chicago criminal attorney (Jessica Lange) defending her father from accusations of war crimes. With Armin Mueller-Stahl, Michael Gambon, and Charles Hallahan. (071-930 3697).

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (18): Harry Alan Towers's tedious version on Gielgud's story, with Robert Englund as a theatrical Phantom. (071-930 3697).

SKI PATROL (PG): Tremendous broad shenanigans at the Snowy Peaks Lodge, from the producer of the Police Academy series, with Roger Moore, Martin Mull, and Charles Hallahan. (071-930 3697).

A TALE OF SPRINGTIME (U): Eric Roberts's absorbing story of the games people play, with Florence David as a cunning teenager hoping to push her new friend (Anne Parillo) into her father's arms. A twisted delight. (071-930 3697).

TREASURE ISLAND (PG): An old favourite deftly filmed by Chazdon Heister's son, Fraser, with Heston as a senior sea captain, and a cast of child stars. (071-930 3697).

THE KRAVYS (18): Brooding, bloody drama about the rise and fall of the East End gangster, from war-time childhood to incarceration in separate prisons. (071-930 3697).

LOOK WHO'S TALKING (12): Intense comedy about an unmarried mum and her talking baby, John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Bruce Willis's voice. (071-930 3697).

MONSIEUR HIRE (18): Intense, stylish version of Samson novel about a bachelor's dark obsession with his neighbour, a striking achievement by director Patrice LeBeau, previously known for comedies. (071-930 3697).

NOTEBOOK ON CITRUS AND CLOTHES (U): Jim Wendler's intimate diary film about the Japanese fashion designer, Yohji Yamamoto, preparing a Paris show, for details only. (071-930 3697).

NUNS ON THE RUN (12): Eric Idle and Robyn Coltrane shuffling as nuns in Janet Suzman's current social comedy. Fast and funny drag comedy, aimed at fans of the stridently raucous. (071-930 3697).

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CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated) across the country.

DREAMS (PG): Akira Kurosawa's fantasia on themes of violence, ecology, and the artist's urge to create. A touch naive, but a visual feast. (071-722 4043) Remor (071-837 8403).

HARD TO KILL (18): Steven Seagal as a cop emerging from a seven-year coma to avenge himself on his assassin. Lachrymose action fare, with Kelly Le Brock. Cannon Picture Street (071-930 0631) Whiteleys (071-732 3303/3304).

HARLEM NIGHTS (18): Tired, vulgar period tale about a nightclub threatened by a corrupt crime boss, an unimpressive vehicle for Eddie Murphy (unimpressive as writer, director and star). Cannon Picture Street (071-930 0631) Plaza (071-497 9899).

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER (PG): Sean Connery as a Soviet submarine commander trying to defect. Ponderous, pre-planned drama. Cannon Picture Street (071-930 0631) Plaza (071-497 9899).

INTERNAL AFFAIRS (18): Richard Gere and Andy Garcia as Los Angeles cops sucked into a vortex of mystery and corruption. Tread Triller. Cannon Picture Street (071-930 0631) Plaza (071-497 9899).

JOHNNY HANDSOME (15): Gritting, unsympathetic action fodder from director Walter Hill, with Mickey Rourke as a disgraced cop who plans a double-cross following plastic surgery. With Ellen Barkin. Cannon Picture Street (071-930 0631) Plaza (071-497 9899).

THE KRAVYS (18): Brooding, bloody drama about the rise and fall of the East End gangster, from war-time childhood to incarceration in separate prisons. (071-930 3697).

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Leicester Square (071-930 6111) Marble Arch (071-723 2011) South Coast (071-722 5905) Whiteleys (071-732 3303/3304).

THE PUNISHER (18): Routine turgidity, based on the Marvel Comics character. (071-930 6111) Marble Arch (071-723 2011) South Coast (071-722 5905) Whiteleys (071-732 3303/3304).

PRETTY WOMAN (15): Shamelessly old-fashioned romantic comedy, given some modest charm and sparkle by Julia Roberts as a lovely prostitute who seduces the cruel of ruthless businessman Richard Gere. Director: Gary Marshall. Cannon Picture Street (071-930 0631) Plaza (071-497 9899).

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER (PG): Sean Connery as a Soviet submarine commander trying to defect. Ponderous, pre-planned drama. Cannon Picture Street (071-930 0631) Plaza (071-497 9899).

INTERNAL AFFAIRS (18): Richard Gere and Andy Garcia as Los Angeles cops sucked into a vortex of

BUSINESS

THURSDAY JUNE 21 1990

Executive Editor
David Brewerton

Isosceles delays dividend payment

ISOSCELES, the company that made the debt-financed £2 billion takeover of Gateway, the supermarket group, last summer, is postponing dividend payments until it completes refinancing proposals.

The cumulative preference dividend for the period to July 1, 1990, amounts to £7.8 million. Preference shareholders will receive interest of 7 per cent per annum from July until the dividend is paid in December.

David Smith, the chief executive of Isosceles, said 85 per cent of the preference shareholders were represented on the board and they decided not to pay a dividend until they had resolved the company's funding structure. He said the group would raise between £75 million and £200 million to refinance the business. A plan will be in place before November when there is the possibility that a covenant on interest cover might be broken.

Isosceles said in March that it would refinance after negotiations fell through between it and Wm Low, the Scottish supermarket group, for Low to buy 81 of Gateway's northern stores for £12.2 million.

NSM up 59%

NSM, the coal-mining and building materials group, made pre-tax profits of £26.2 million in the year to March, an increase of 59 per cent. Following a doubling in the tax charge, the final and total dividend is up 17 per cent to 3.5p. *Tempos, page 25*

Power dealings

First dealings in the 12 electricity distribution companies are likely to start on December 11. The prospectuses should be available by late November. Investors' cheques must be at the receiving banks by December 5. *The puzzle of power, page 25*

H&C in index

Harrisons & Crossfield has edged Cocksfoot Group out of the FT-SE 100 index in the latest quarterly review of constituents.

Stock market, page 29

THE POUND

US dollar 1.7215 (+0.0005)

W German mark 2.8930 (+0.0189)

Exchange index 90.8 (+0.4)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1903.4 (-4.0)

FT-SE 100 2371.2 (+1.5)

New York Dow Jones 2882.43 (-11.13)

Tokyo Nikkei Ave 32087.76 (-47.38)

Closing Prices ... Page 31

Major indices and major changes Page 29

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base 15%

3 month interbank 14 1/4-14 1/2

3 month eligible bills 14 1/2-14 3/4

US Prime Rate 10%

Federal Funds n/a

90 day Treasury bills 7.75-7.74%

30 year bonds 10 1/2-10 3/4

CURRENCIES

London: New York: £1.7215 \$1.7245

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Major unveils plan for hard European unit

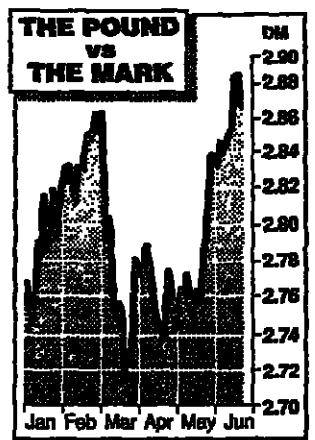
By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE chancellor, John Major, last night proposed a "hard" European currency unit parallel to European Community currencies that could become the single EC unit.

The hard ecu would be managed by a new institution, a European monetary fund, rather than the EC central bank, or "Eurofed", foreseen in the Delors plan for European monetary union and so strongly opposed by Margaret Thatcher.

But Mr Major's idea is not warm endorsement of a single currency. This is seen as a possibility for the "very long term, if peoples and governments so choose". His proposal comes before next week's community summit in Dublin where monetary union is high on the agenda.

While the chancellor said the single currency question was not a decision to be taken now, Robin Leigh-Pemberton, governor of the Bank of England, made clear that he did not share the prime minister's view that the decision is not for this generation. Before a Lords select committee, Mr Leigh-Pemberton supported the hard ecu plan, but underlined that he would not back anything inconsistent with the ultimate Delors goal of a



single currency and a Eurofed. Mr Major's proposal, based on an initiative last month by Sir Michael Butler, a former British ambassador to the community, fulfils the government's pledge to produce alternatives to Delors plan. For the government, the scheme has the attraction of retaining the Treasury's "evolutionary" approach to monetary union, allowing the market to decide which currency it favours. It provides for currency competition, a concept launched by Nigel Lawson, the former chancellor, without necessarily leading to mark supremacy. The ecu would not be allowed to weaken when par-

ity realignments take place in European monetary system currencies. This would make the unit the firmest ERM currency. The hard ecu is foreseen coming to play when all community currencies have been brought into the monetary system exchange-rate mechanism.

Mr Major reaffirmed the government's commitment to joining the ERM, but only when its conditions are met. Expectations of fresh guidance on the mechanism, boosted by the pound on the foreign exchange markets. The trade-weighted index closed 0.4 higher at 90.8.

In his address to a German Industry Forum dinner in London, the chancellor made clear his proposal was based on a completed stage one of the Delors plan, when all community currencies would be in the mechanism. Echoing Mrs Thatcher's view that the community should not create institutions that exclude the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, he said conclusions were needed that "take all of Europe's nations forward." He restated the government's rejection of a Eurofed for its lack of political accountability, and because a single monetary authority would not be able to deliver the necessary economic and low inflation performance.

Mr Leigh-Pemberton said the central bank governors of West Germany, France, the Benelux countries and, possibly Denmark, believed they could already operate fixed exchange rates between themselves, creating an inner, fast-track group in the EMS. But Mr Major gave a warning that attempts to impose rapid, total solutions presumed far greater economic convergence than exists. "It is far from self-evident that such convergence is to be achieved by means of a single common monetary policy."

The key to progress, he said, is promoting convergence of economic performance, low inflation and stable exchange rates "by building up the infant ecu". The European monetary fund would act as a currency board, providing Ecu on demand in exchange for community currencies. It would only issue ecu notes fully backed by its holdings of community currencies, thereby presenting no threat to inflation. Interest rates on ecu loans would be based on a weighted average of interest rates in its constituent currencies, giving the fund no role in setting rates. *Comment, page 25*

Conflicting signs from money data

By OUR ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BANK lending figures yesterday showed clear signs of the economy slowing down, but money supply data showed M0, the sole aggregate to be a Treasury target, still rising well above its target range.

Although M0 growth slowed to an annual rate of 6.9 per cent last month from 7.3 per cent in April, it remained well above the chancellor's target range of 1-5 per cent. The market had expected more of a deceleration.

The government hopes that high interest rates will curb the money supply and reduce inflation, but costlier credit has probably boosted the use of cash. This lifts M0, largely notes and coins in circulation.

Joe Roseman, UK economist at UBS-Phillips & Drew, said M0 remained "uncomfortably high". However, he expected it to have slowed by the end of the year to around 5 per cent growth.

Bank of England money

supply figures showed bank and building society lending up by £5.8 billion in May after an exceptionally low £3.9 billion rise in April. The average monthly rise for the past six months is £6.9 billion.

Banking Information Service data showed total clearing bank lending to the private sector a seasonally adjusted £750 million higher last month, slightly up on April's £600 million. Compared with the six-month average of £2.3 billion, it was well down.

Stephen King, an economist with James Capel, agreed with the Treasury that lending data confirmed a slowdown, but said other indicators, such as industrial output, suggested a "fairly robust" economy.

Personal lending remained subdued, up by £340 million. In May last year, it rose by £603 million. Corporate borrowing continues to worry City economists. Mr King saw signs of "distress borrowing".

STC shares hit by warning

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK

SHARES in STC, the ICL computers and telecommunications group, dropped 19p to 239p, and fell as low as 230p at one point yesterday, after it warned shareholders that its first-half profits will fall below City expectations.

The warning also prompted an investigation by the stock exchange into a large traded options deal in STC executed by UBS Phillips & Drew before the STC announcement.

P&D, which bought 950 STC put options on behalf of a client at around 7p on Tues-

day, when the stock market was rife with rumours of difficulties at STC, is understood to have sold a major part of them at 17p yesterday. The puts, effectively a gamble that the shares will slump, would result in a £95,000 profit if all were bought at 7p and sold at 17p.

The broker has no corporate links with STC. The Stock Exchange monitors all big share trades ahead of the release of price-sensitive information.

Arthur Walsh, the STC chairman and chief executive,

said interim pre-tax profit forecasts of £100 million were "too optimistic". Analysts promptly cut their estimates to between £80 million and £90 million. Last year STC reported interim pre-tax profits of £114.6 million.

Mr Walsh said STC "is still seeking a satisfactory outcome for the whole year despite current market conditions". Analysts, however, marked down their full-year forecasts to between £230 million and £240 million from about £270 million. STC made 1989 pre-tax profits of £278 million.

Charities 'have spent' Ferranti money

By STEPHEN LEATHER

JAMES Guerin, the former deputy chairman of Ferranti International, has denied he took part in a fraud against the British defence firm. He is still refusing to speak directly about the alleged fraud that left Ferranti with a £215 million assets shortfall, but yesterday he released a statement through his lawyer.

Mr Guerin claimed that a High Court decision on Monday that he should pay \$189 million to two Ferranti subsidiaries was a "sham" designed to protect the company from its own mistakes.

"In our opinion, Mr Guerin did not receive fair and impartial treatment by the British courts," said the statement issued by Joseph Tate, his lawyer. It is only the third statement on the alleged fraud issued by Mr Guerin, who now lives in Florida.

It claimed that Mr Guerin's legal team will "vigorously oppose" any effort to collect the \$189 million and is "confident we can display what a sham and biased proceeding it was". The statement

said the British court acted in a way that "eliminates the possibility that Mr Guerin would expose Ferranti and its executives for their acts of omission and commission". It added: "This decision should be an embarrassment to the British courts, the British government and the people of the United Kingdom."

In 1987 Ferranti paid £420 million for International Signal & Control of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the company Mr Guerin founded. He resigned as Ferranti's deputy chairman in May last year. The High Court decision on Monday came after he refused to give details of the whereabouts of \$450 million paid out by ISC subsidiaries to five Panamanian companies as part of an alleged elaborate defence contract fraud.

Ferranti claims that some of the missing money was diverted through Panama to Switzerland to Mr Guerin's private charity, Parent Foundation. Enquiries in Pennsylvania suggest that Ferranti has little if any chance of being able to recover any of the \$1.8 million of its money that Mr Guerin is alleged to

have handed out to charities in 1987 and 1988. Ferranti is unlikely to attempt to recover these funds.

Parent paid out almost \$10 million to charities and worthy causes in and around Lancaster, but many of the groups who received money now say it has been spent and cannot be recovered. Deirdre Jacobson, executive director of the Fulton Opera House, which received \$30,000 in 1987 and 1988, said: "That money was given for specific programmes. It no longer exists."

Conrad Bishop, producing director for The Independent Eye theatre, which received \$20,000, said there was no money left for Ferranti. "I think we could give them a lot of old lighting instruments. We might have some boxes of old newsletters around," he said.

The Pennsylvania School of Art and Design used its \$20,000 donation from Parent to cover operating expenses such as leases, payroll and equipment. Robert Brummett, the school's president, said Ferranti would not be able to have its money back.

Unigate's £105m bon appetit



John Clement, chairman of Unigate, the St Ivel dairy group, sees encouraging prospects in its food interests but difficulties in non-food. Pre-tax profit rose from £100.5 million to £105.5 million in the year to March, on £2.44 billion turnover (£2.36 billion). A final 9.6p payout makes 15.3p (13.9p) for the year. *Tempos, page 25*

Coal lifts offer for Globe to 205p

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

BRITISH Coal Pension funds yesterday sent Barclays de Zoete Wedd into the stock market with a general offer to buy enough shares to give them control of Globe Investment Trust after raising their takeover bid from 191p to 205p per share.

The tactic, however, failed to give the pension funds immediate control. Only 26 million of the 95 million shares needed were bought by BZW.

The new bid, which values Britain's biggest investment trust at £1.11 billion, is final unless a counterbidder appears. The offer, which was pitched at Globe's opening price yesterday, was not regarded as generous in the City. But the British Coal funds have a head start, as they already own nearly 34 per cent of the shares.

David Hardie, chairman of Globe, immediately rejected the final offer and said he had been expecting more.

The new offer came on the day when the agreed takeover of the unquoted Reedpack group, which both Globe and its suitor had backed as a buy-out two years ago, added 2.8p per share to Globe's worth. It values the trust's holding at £30 million, against an original cost of £12 million and Globe's latest valuation of £14.6 million.

Globe maintained that its total value was still about 233p, the figure it claimed at the beginning of the month, since the Reedpack profit offset adverse currency effects.

David Southcott of the British Coal funds said that after adjusting for Reedpack and other matters, the new bid was at a discount of only 4.4 per cent to the 214p conventional calculation of Globe's net asset value.

Comment, page 25

Swedes' Reedpack takeover benefits buyout backers

By DEREK HARRIS, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

SEVEN executive directors, nearly 300 senior managers and about a quarter of the workforce who are shareholders at Reedpack, the paper, packaging and office supplies group, have great cash expectations after an agreed £1 billion takeover by the Swedish forest group, Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget.

SCA is buying out the Reedpack equity for nearly £544 million, with the rest of the deal taking up debt, almost two years after Reedpack was Britain's then-biggest buyout as managers and workers took the operations out of Reed International, the publisher, for £608 million.

Top managers have seen their stake improved by a management performance racket scheme during the unquoted company's healthy growth. So, they come out best from a deal that the City sees as SCA paying a top price for key market shares in Europe. Reedpack's share structure

is complex, but Peter Williams, managing director, said that he expected to get about £5 million for his 150,000 shares. That means that values have risen 34 times.

Mr Williams, who like the rest of Reedpack management



Williams: £5 million

stays in place, is joining SCA's board and plans with his shares to take an option of converting to SCA stock.

Six fellow executive directors are likely to pick up about £2 million apiece. They are

John Miller, Sir Jonathan Bann, John Benson, Ian Chalk, Frank Shekleton and Eric Smith.

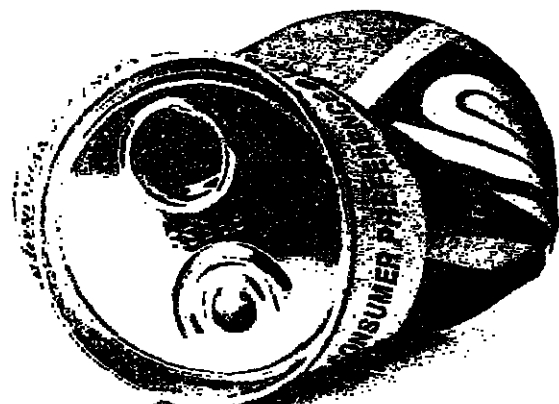
A general manager of a plant might make £250,000 or more profit, and a sales manager perhaps half that, said Mr Williams. About 3,000 workers will see the value of their holding rise by close to three times. The average holding is £1,200, but some stakes are well above.

Big profits also go to City institutions behind the buy-out, including the Coal Board pension funds, 3i, Citicorp Investors, Globe Investment Trust, British Rail's pension fund and Prudential.

Reed International has accepted SCA's offer for its stake, realising £94.9 million.

Reedpack needed a partner to develop recycling facilities at Aylesford, Kent.

SCA is to sell its 49 per cent of Smurfit Corrugated Holdings and its 24.5 per cent of UK Corrugated to Jefferson Smurfit Group.



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Davy results fall short of forecasts

By STEPHEN LEATHER

DAVY Corporation, the engineering company, has produced disappointing results reflecting difficulties with its North Sea contracts.

Pre-tax profits for the year to end-March were up only 4.5 per cent to £30.1 million on sales almost 26 per cent higher at £1.22 billion. Analysts had been expecting much better results, with Martin Jackson of Schroders predicting £34 million and Mark Dichian of Barclays de Zoete Wedd expecting £35 million.

The company also caused disappointment by announcing a 6.5p final dividend, which makes the total 9p compared with 8.5p last year. Many analysts had been expecting 9.5p and the shares were quickly marked down 14p to 230p.

Sir Alistair Frame, the RTZ chairman who took over the chair at Davy in January, blamed difficulties in the group's offshore division, which recorded losses of £25.6 million, compared with £2.82 million losses last year.

Sir Alistair said the problems arose "largely from changes in the scope and timing of work on the contract

for a floating production facility for the Emerald oil field in the North Sea, giving rise to increased costs and delays".

David Soley, chief executive of the division, left in March. The company's other five divisions — metals, process, mechanical handling, services and construction and property — all turned in excellent performances, Sir Alistair said.

Following the acquisition of Clecim, the French process plant firm, for £43 million, paid in shares, Davy is one of the world's biggest designers and manufacturers of process plant to the metals industry, accounting for about 44 per cent of group sales.

The value of the group's forward workload increased by 13 per cent to £1.4 billion, excluding any contribution from Clecim.

Sir Alistair said: "Completion of the contract for the Emerald Field will be an important event in the current year. That apart, the current workload and the benefits arising from the acquisition of the Clecim Group should see a satisfactory year for the remaining divisions."



Chips Keenwick, Hambros vice-chairman for banking, flanked by Christopher Spörberg (right), vice-chairman for investments and Sir Adam Ridley, executive director, explains how Hambros beat City forecasts with a 10 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £75.3 million in the year to end-March. The dividend was raised by 15 pence to 11.5p a share and Hambros shares gained 2p to 285p.

Steel profits 'underestimated'

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Department of Trade and Industry accepted a substantial underestimate of British Steel's likely profits when deciding its sale price, the House of Commons public accounts committee said.

The likely profit, the MPs found, was "the most influential factor" behind the decision to sell 2 billion BS shares in 1988 for 125p each, raising £2.437 billion. Three

months before the sale, the company forecast a 1988-89 profit of £468 million, which turned out to be considerably higher at £593 million. BS has predicted profits for 1989-90 at about £850 million.

In its report on the department's handling of the sale, the committee said it was concerned at the underestimate of profit forecasts. However, it did not believe it led to

any "significant impact" on the sale price.

Otherwise, the committee praised the department's handling of the privatisation of British Steel.

House of Commons committee of public accounts 20th report — Department of Trade and Industry: sale of government shareholdings in British Steel plc, Stationery Office, £4.05.

Full listing sought by marina developer

By MATTHEW BOND

MARINA Developments, the USM-quoted marina developer and operator, is to apply for a full listing.

The announcement accompanied preliminary figures from the group, which showed that pre-tax profits had risen 29 per cent to £5.88 million in the year to March. Net assets per share rose 19 per cent to 749p a share. A share buy-in since the year-end has increased pro forma net assets to 762p a share.

David Heimann, chairman, says sales of residential property around the group's marinas have held up well despite the depressed nature of the housing market.

The company moved into selling waterside property following its £18.5 million acquisition of four marinas and marina villages from Dean & Dyball last July.

The company has also sold another 100 of its berths on 45-year leases at an average price of £44,000, taking total sales to 150.

A final dividend of 7p (5.5p) is being paid to give a total of 12p (7.5p) for the year, an increase of 60 per cent.

Last month Robert Iliffe's private investment trust, Yatendorn, acquired a 16.3 per cent stake in Marina from Priest Mariani.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Leading banks 'agree Trump bailout plan'

Donald Trump's four leading bank creditors are reported to have worked out a tentative agreement to lend the embattled New York property developer \$65 million and to defer interest and principal payments on about \$850 million of his \$2 billion debt. However, the four must now persuade other lenders to go along with the deal. The Japanese banks that have a large share of Trump's existing loans are regarded as central to the success of the plan.

The big four — Citibank, Bankers Trust, Chase Manhattan and Manufacturers Hanover — will together contribute \$32.4 million to the rescue plan. Two other American banks will provide \$7.5 million. National Westminster, which is also heavily exposed to Trump, may provide about \$5 million.

Unit trusts' value rises

A SURGE in stock market values added £3.8 billion, or 7 per cent, to the value of unit trusts last month, taking them to their highest figure this year. Unit trust groups now manage funds worth £57 billion. Gross sales were £13 per cent up on April, and net new investment of £191.9 million was 12 times higher. The UTA says the market surge has swelled the number of accounts.

Mountview lifts payout

DIRECTORS of Mountview Estates, the property dealing company, are recommending an increase in total dividend payments despite a fall in pre-tax profits. A final dividend of 7.5p a share gives a total of 11.5p (9.5p) for the year. Pre-tax profits in the year to March fell by 23 per cent to £8.95 million on turnover of £13.7 million. Operating profits were £9.36 million.

Property helps Owen

OWEN & Robinson, the jeweller, made pre-tax profits of £1 million for the year to January 1990, up from £816,000 for the eight months to January 1989, after a change in year-end. Pre-tax profit for the 12 months to January 1989 was £452,000. The company would have reported a £580,000 loss in 1989-90 if it had not been for property and rental profits of £2.29 million (£75,000 for the eight months). Gross profit fell from £22.9 million in the eight months to £1.09 million last year. Earnings fell from 2.42p to 1.59p and the dividend of 0.5p is down from 1.5p last year. The shares were unchanged at 42p.

Interest lifts Reckitt price

SHARES in Reckitt & Coleman, the food and household products company, rose 2p to 1,309p after it revealed it had received unsolicited expressions of interest in acquiring Reckitt's Colours, a group division that manufactures a pigment used in laundry products. The division made operating profits of £4.6 million.

Premier at £12.1m net

PREMIER Consolidated Oilfields, which earned a £4.8 million extraordinary profit on the sale of its Ultramar holding last year, made operating profit of £5.89 million (£7.18 million) and net profit of £12.1 million (£11.7 million) for the 12 months to March. A one-for-ten capitalisation issue is proposed in lieu of dividends.

Oil firm seeks listing

PITTENCRIEFF, the oil and gas production and development company, has applied for a full listing on the stock exchange. At the same time the Edinburgh-based company, which is capitalised at £20.46 million, is seeking to raise £7.6 million via a placement of shares at 120p to fund acquisitions in North America.

The company buys unprofitable oil and gas assets and improves their efficiency. Its current assets are in Texas. Until now shares in Pittencriff have been traded on a matched-bidder basis under the stock exchange's rule 535.2. Dealings in the new shares are expected to begin on July 2.

Sale of Hoskyns stake prolonged

By MARTIN BARROW

HOSKYNs, Britain's biggest computer services specialist, has conceded that the search for a buyer for GEC/Siemens' 74 per cent shareholding in the company was taking longer than anticipated.

But Geoff Unwin, executive chairman, said he would not consider dropping pre-conditions attached to the sale, including the retention of a separate stock market listing for Hoskyns and a pledge to allow the company to run its own affairs.

He said that negotiations continued with a number of possible bidders. Although an announcement was not imminent, he hoped to see "an early resolution to this matter".

"The issues are complex, but a potential bidder has to be clear about its priorities," he said. The company's close ties with the former Plessey companies now owned by GEC/Siemens were not a stumbling block to an early settlement.

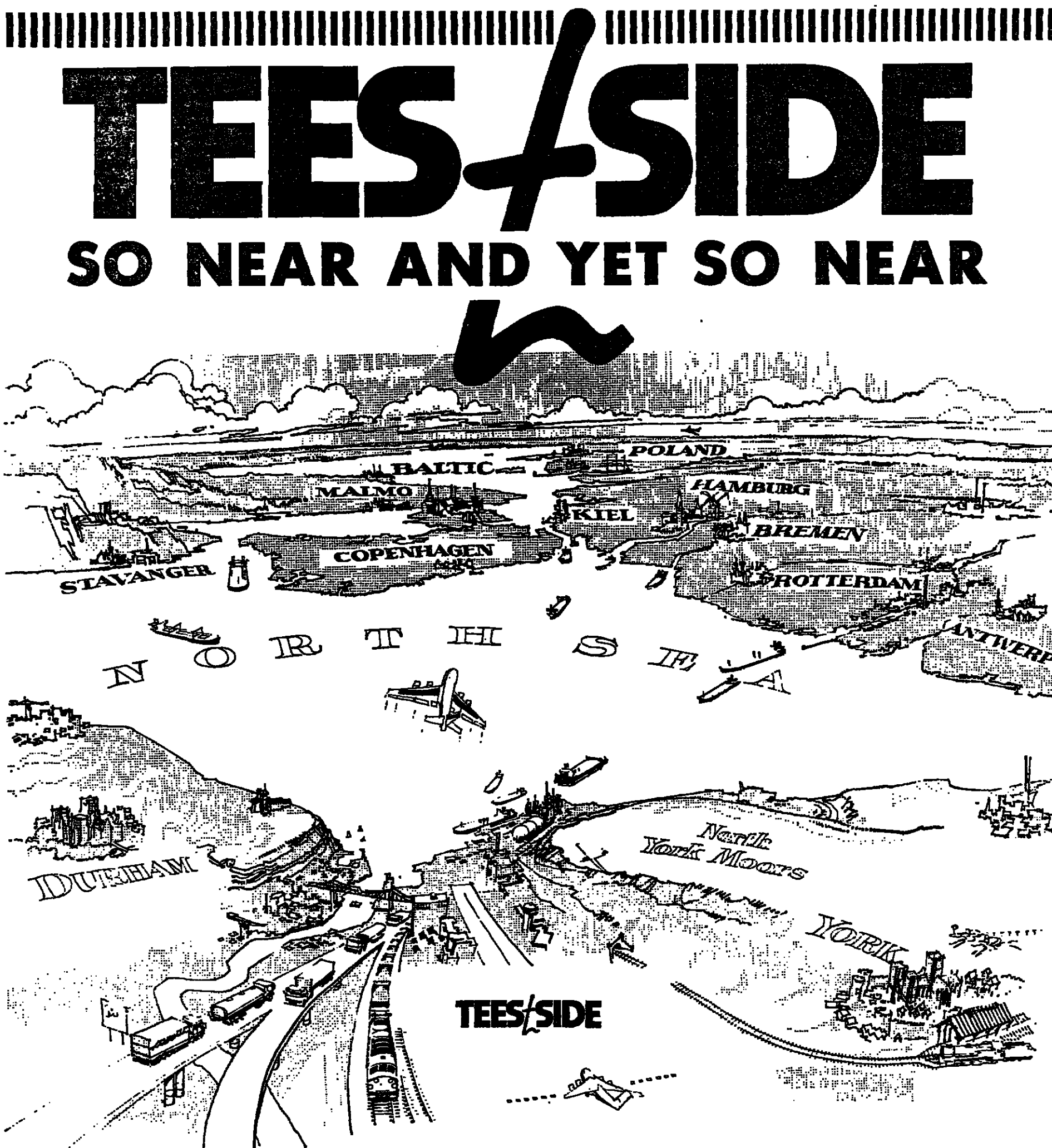
Hoskyns yesterday announced interim profits up 21 per

cent from £6.73 million before tax to £8.16 million for the six months to the end of April. City reaction to the results was tempered by a warning from Mr Unwin that high interest rates and a slump in business confidence had affected areas in which the company operated. Shares in Hoskyns were unchanged at 322p.

"We are much more cautious than we were this time last year. The economy has tightened up even more," said Mr Unwin, although he anticipated another year of growth. Earnings per share rose by 17 per cent from 5.4p to 6.3p. The interim dividend is increased by 15 pence from 0.65p a share to 0.75p.

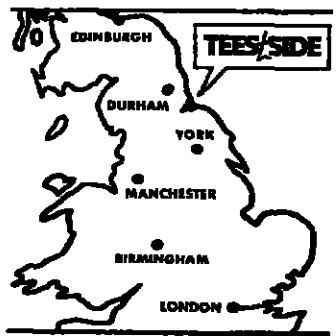
Turnover advanced 28 per cent from £87.3 million to £111.7 million.

Systems integration activities were benefiting from increasing interest from the health sector. In facilities management 15 new agreements had been signed, including three with former Plessey companies now owned by Siemens.



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Kitcat hangs on by its claw

TALK that last-ditch attempts to find a buyer for Kitcat & Alder had been made. Although the company's commission-earning man, has indeed been thrown in the towel, James Campbell — as yesterday's City Live said — has been negotiating by his former colleagues. The firm's one-time chairman, Campbell, says that it is not yet clear whether the company will be sold or not. He says that the company is still in the market for a buyer. Campbell says that the company is still in the market for a buyer. Campbell says that the company is still in the market for a buyer.

Ecus, madam? They'll do nicely

COMMENT

DAVID BREWERTON

This afternoon, the French Treasury has invited selected journalists for a briefing session on some of the practical implications of European monetary union. Not to be outdone, or indeed outmanoeuvred, Her Majesty's Treasury hurriedly convened a briefing yesterday afternoon, in advance of a speech last night from John Major on much the same subject. There was a degree of "hype" in the whole procedure. The Chancellor's number two, Norman Lamont, had been scheduled to speak last night to the German Industry Forum: instead of the understudy, they got the star.

This flurry of last-minute activity suggested to a market straining every nerve for news of Britain's entry into the exchange-rate mechanism that the Chancellor was going to say something positive. Sterling advanced 2 pence. Instead of news, however, the Chancellor set out a bargaining position.

The bottom line in the debate about monetary union is which currency comes out on top. We can be sure it will not be sterling, and we can be equally certain

that if we go down Nigel Lawson's competing currency route, the mark will emerge top of the tree. So Mr Major has picked up Sir Michael Butler's theme of a European Monetary Fund, this institution then administering the ecu, so touchingly termed "our infant common currency". The Chancellor seems to have adopted the "new man" image that is besetting the advertising industry, and it is likely to be equally unsuccessful.

We would be wrong to doubt the honesty of the Chancellor's proposals, but they are unlikely to do more than slow the pace. Wholehearted acceptance by the community is unlikely. Leaving aside the flights of fancy, such as the notion that ecu notes "could capture the popular imagination", the community is unlikely to buy the idea of a hard ecu, making its own way across Europe. Like the unfortunate camel, the ecu could end up with

the attributes of a horse designed by committee, but less useful.

Much more, however, is expected of this animal than was ever likely to be achieved by the current "soft" ecu. In time, the ecu would become the common currency for Europe, and in the very long term, said Mr Major, picking his words with a skill learned around the cabinet table, "if peoples and governments so choose", it could develop into a single currency.

The ecu out of the basket would not suffer the "average" effect that is so objected to by Karl Otto Pöhl, but if brilliantly administered by a fiercely independent central bank would naturally attach itself to the best in Europe rather than hover

around the mean. A currency without an economy will presumably need an anchor, and to tie it to strength rather than to a cocktail should have a salutary effect on inflation-prone economies.

The initiative was not surprising in itself, but the adoption of the hard ecu as the European monetary candidate suggests two themes to warm the hearts of those who advocate early entry into the exchange-rate mechanism. The first is that entry is now taken entirely for granted. The time for discussion on the merits of Delors stage one is past. We are going in, the timing to be dictated as much by politics as economics. The government will do its best to make the timing of

entry a surprise. We will wake up one morning, and be there. The second is that Britain does want to play a full part in the shaping of the world beyond stage one, and is setting out its stall in front of the inter-governmental conference in December.

Global irony

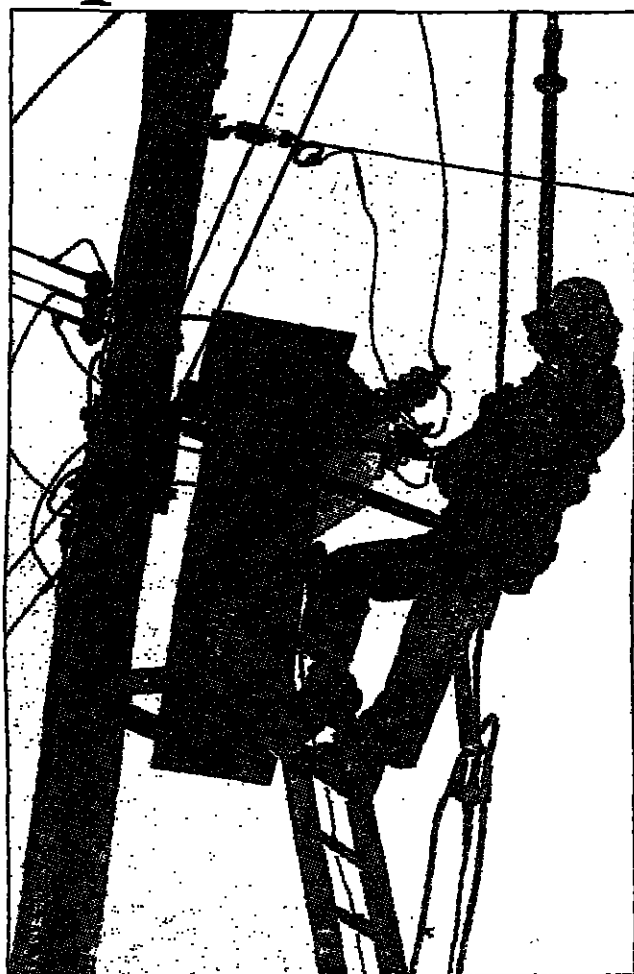
The bid for Globe has exposed the great conundrum of investment trusts. They were designed for the private investor but are controlled by the institutions. They are in business to provide investment management and spread to individuals without the means to engage their own investment managers. On the whole, investment trusts do their job well. Some, but not Globe, have done outstandingly well over many years.

Although there are better performing trusts around than

Globe, it is a reasonable assumption that Globe shareholders would sooner leave their money where it is, than have the complications of selling to a bidder and reinvesting. If they were minded to sell to buy a better performer, they did not have to wait for a bid to do so. Almost by definition, private money is put into investment trusts for long-term accumulation, to give the investor not the last penny of performance but to give him peace of mind and professional management. Globe's fate will be decided not by the tens of thousands of private shareholders, but by the same 50 institutions who have delivered other trusts to other bidders.

At present, the market has moved Globe's way. The revised bid stands 12 per cent below claimed net asset value. Despite all the shareholder support, the expressions of loyalty and the generally good job that Globe does for its shareholders, now that the Coal Pension Funds have raised the price, control of our biggest investment trust looks set to fall into its lap.

Why Tory in-fighting could fuse power sale



High wire act: political events may threaten sale

It does with the perceived start of the run-up to the next general election. It was a feature of the water floatation that the FSA was used as an extension of the Official Secrets Act, to plug unwanted - as opposed to Whitehall-sanctioned - leaks. However, the time it has taken to dismantle and rebuild an

entire industry has left the government's advisers with their fingers in the dike for rather longer than previously.

The distributors, like water companies but unlike the generators, are virtually risk-free businesses, utilities with an assured future income.

Ordinarily, all that investors would have to choose be-

tween is the differing yields on offer and the differences in demographic trends and management approach from region to region. Despite the pressure not to give any further information, it is already obvious that while some are keen on being seen as "glorified Granny bonds", others favour a more entrepreneurial approach carrying some element of risk.

The factor that could still scupper the float is political risk, or, more precisely, the perceived political risk in the eyes of the relatively unsophisticated private investor. The worst-case scenario being discussed in the City involves further hesitation over entry into the European exchange-rate mechanism this autumn, coupled with signs that John Major, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is still failing to get to grips with inflation.

That could prompt a serious challenge to Mrs Thatcher's leadership as the float is being underwritten, climaxing in a bruising battle just when the shares are being marketed. The last outbreak of political jitters, in the run-up to the May local authority elections, prompted concern in the City, which advisers to the float attempted to counter with kite-flying. Power might not be privatised in one chunk, it was whispered, to the horror of the industry chairmen, who had looked forward to a clean break with Whitehall.

One City analyst says: "A few weeks ago, the attitude was 'things will probably get worse before they get better'. The City is a little more sanguine at the moment - it goes to show how quickly things can change."

However, it is the possibility that things may change again if political uncertainty revives in the autumn that is unnerving some observers. The analyst commented: "A leadership challenge in the autumn wouldn't be good news for the privatisation. It would be the smaller investor who would be most put off. It's a public relations job that would save the day - and given some of the PR jobs recently, that doesn't give us too much hope."

Martin Waller

TEMPUS

Home to boost at Unigate

COWS may or may not be mad in Britain, but chickens are having their necks wrung in increasing numbers.

Unigate has seen demand for pork, turkey and chicken improve, but non-food interests let the side down in the year to March, and £105.5 million pre-tax profits against £100.5 million were no better than expected. The outcome includes £12.7 million, up from £6.7 million, of property profits, and operating profit rose by £4 million due to lower pension fund contributions.

Considering all the woes visited upon Unigate last year - hot weather hitting milk sales, the hangover from the salmonella scare, increased production security to fend off food sabotage threats - the fall in the return on trading capital employed from a peak 28.7 per cent to 26 per cent is hardly surprising. Unigate's exhibition interests through Giltspur and the motor interests through Wincanton are unlikely to recover lost ground until interest rates fall and consumer confidence picks up. Operating profits from distribution services fell from £30.2 million to £23.6 million.

Meanwhile, Unigate Restaurants put in a 44 per cent profit spurt thanks to the popularity in America of its Black Eyed Pea chain, and the balance sheet stays strong with net gearing of 6 per cent and interest cover at 10 times. Takeover thoughts from the Larry Goodman and/or Associated British Foods camps have faded, and the shares at 312p, up 7p, have underperformed the market by 23 per cent over 12 months. Recovery potential in weaker areas and margin improvement hopes make pre-tax profits of £109 million this year a possibility. On a prospective p/e ratio of 9.7, backed by a 6.5 per cent yield, Unigate is a hold. The shares can be reclassified a buy when interest rates look like falling.

Hambros

HAMBROS has done better than most expected. An extra £80 million in capital, brought in via the Hambros Investment Trust takeover, helped the banking division raise profits from £36.8 million to £64.1 million in the year to end-March.

Good treasury fees profits and a boost in leasing compensated for a thin year in corporate finance, whose efforts for Hoylake earned almost £3 million but might have been much higher.

One-off profits from the HIT deal more than wiped out a £9.2 million share of losses from the separately quoted estate agency business. Such swings and roundabouts underline the group's breadth,

which is complemented by its traditional investments.

Net transfers to hidden reserves, which have to be phased out in 1992, were small. Fully diluted earnings of 28.9p per share, up 15 per cent, still provide healthy cover for the 11.5p dividend, which has progressed from 6.17p in 1984-85.

That makes the 5.4 per cent yield, at 285p, attractive. Profits should rise again this year, mainly due to the continuing impact of higher capital on the banking side.

Chris Smith at BZW forecasts a £10 million rise in group pre-tax profits to about £85 million, which would leave the shares selling at 9.5 times prospective earnings.

Hambros sells at a premium to net asset value while some others of better quality sell at a discount. To counter that, six outside groups of varying degrees of friendliness hold 54 per cent of its shares, adding long-term spice.

NSM

IF Don Carr, the NSM chairman, is distracted by the air of uncertainty prompted by the "for sale" sign that hangs over Anglo United's 20.5 per cent stake in his company, he is not letting it show.

Yesterday's results showed the two-year-old recovery firmly on track, with steady

progress in the development of three divisions that will eventually contribute equally to profits. They are coal mining, building and, still to come, waste disposal.

NSM's progress on profits is more spectacular, with the bad old, loss-making days of its former incarnation, Burnett & Hallamshire, behind it. In the 12 months to March, pre-tax profits grew by 59 per cent to £26.2 million, helped by a full contribution from Bison, the pre-cast concrete group it bought in 1988.

The dividend increased by 17 per cent to 3.5p a share (3p), hampered by a rise in the tax charge to 20 per cent.

Following February's £49 million rights issue, gearing dropped to a year-end level of 13 per cent but is rising again. Year-end gearing is forecast to be 55 per cent, a level the company says it is comfortable with, but one that shareholders will not want to see move much higher.

In the current year the worry is likely to be Bison, where profits could easily be flat. Group pre-tax profits could rise to £32-£33 million although earnings per share, following the rights issue, are likely to be little different from last year's 9.75p. At 82p, the shares may suffer a little rights issue indigestion in the short term, but should reward patience.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Kitcat hangs on by its claws

TALK that last-ditch negotiations to find a buyer for Kitcat & Aitken had failed is premature. Although Nick Spearling, the broker's top commission-earning salesman, has indeed effectively thrown in the towel by joining James Capel - as noted in yesterday's City Diary - behind the scenes negotiations by his former colleagues are in fact continuing. Peter Nuttall, the firm's one-time senior partner and managing director, says that it is incorrect to say that discussions with another potential saviour - Banque Indosuez - have been called off. "I don't want to name names but we are still in talks with them, or whoever," he said. Of the firm's original staff of 120 - all made redundant by Canadian parent RBC Dominion Securities last week - Nuttall had hoped that his negotiations would result in a new home being found for 80 analysts and salesmen. Despite the protracted nature of the discussions, and the disappointment of a last-minute refusal by Deutsche Bank, Nuttall says that more than 70 employees are still keeping other job offers on ice, in the hope that they will eventually be able to move elsewhere en masse. Talk in the Square Mile is that these ongoing negotiations are indeed with Banque Indosuez and, if successful, will result in at least 25 ex-Kitcat brokers and

analysts joining the bank, under the Kitcat name, and possibly working in conjunction with W I Carr, the broker, which is already owned by Indosuez.

A TEN-POINT guide from the mining team at Kleinwort Benson Securities on the theory of mining investment includes the advice that potential investors should never buy shares in a company whose chairman has either monogrammed shirt cuffs, a large dress ring or a gold Rolex. "The last two are likely to contain more gold than the company's ore reserves," the guide says.

Hole in one second PROPERTY investor Ron Popely, described by those who know him as a "rough but likeable diamond", is more than a match for any adver-

sary - even when it takes the form of an unexploded German bomb. For Popely, aged 39, chairman of Barbican Holdings, the third market property developer, calmly summoned the police the other day when workmen building an 18-hole championship golf course on his 250-acre Hever Stud in Kent stumbled across a 500lb bomb. It was duly detonated by a bomb-squad team, leaving a gaping hole which will, Popely tells me, now be known as the "bomb bunker" to commemorate the event. "We wouldn't want to blow up any City businessmen teeing off," he quips, adding that the new golf course, complete with luxury 70-room hotel, should be open by May 1991. Popely joined Barbican a year ago, injecting £3 million of his own money, and hopes to take it to the USM by September.

Heading off

BOB Head - London's longest serving City editor - retires tomorrow after 29 years with the Daily and Sunday Mirror. Last night Robert Maxwell hosted a surprise leaving party for him in the Mirror's staff restaurant and presented him with a video recorder as a farewell gift. Also there to say goodbye were hundreds of Bob's colleagues, past and present, and City contacts built up during his 44 years as a journalist. Head and his wife Maureen were also given a special spoof edition of the Daily Mirror with the headline "Head Rolls." Head, who celebrates

his 60th birthday on Sunday, will be replaced by John Husband, a mere 24-year veteran of the paper.

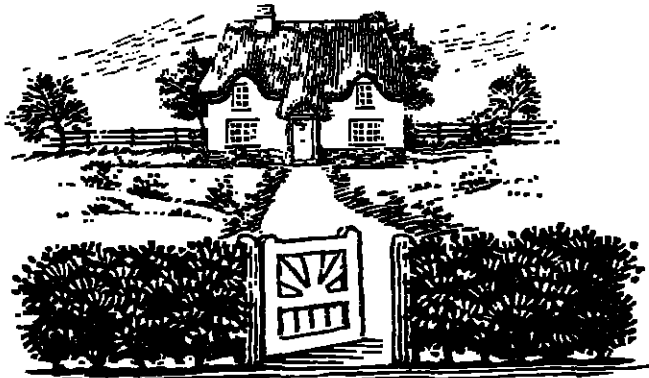
GRAFFITO in the washroom at Cuddiham magistrates' court: "Say no to the deportations - keep the football hooligans in Sardinia."

Dead ringer

BELEAGUERED ex-billionaire Donald John Trump apparently has a new set of financial advisers. According to sources quoted by the tabloids in the United States he is now talking to the dead. It was an idea put to him, they say, by a close friend, ex-President Richard Nixon, who in his darkest days of despair in the midst of Watergate, used to stalk the White House corridors conversing with the spirits of Washington and Lincoln. He claims that he found it very calming. Those allegedly close to Trump say he has now struck up a conversation with the late R.D. Rockefeller. Whether or not this helps him to talk his bankers round, Trump will nevertheless suffer the ignominy of being formally drummed out of the billionaires' club next month by Forbes magazine. Forbes says he will not appear in its annual list of the world's billionaires, due to be published in July. According to its researchers, he is, at best, only a half billionaire.

Carol Leonard

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Mr. Maxwell...
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LONDON TR

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AGB will audition for US television ratings contract

By PHILIP ROBINSON in LOS ANGELES and MELINDA WITTSTOCK in LONDON

ROBERT Maxwell is taking Pergamon AGB, his private market research group, into its second battle to gain a monopoly in the American television audience measurement market.

The move comes after ABC, CBS and NBC, the three US networks, displeased with the current Nielsen ratings system, called for competitors to create a better one.

Mr Maxwell, who yesterday took over the chairmanship of Pergamon AGB from his son Kevin, who becomes deputy chairman, said: "Pergamon AGB has been asked by the networks to re-enter the American market."

David Poltrack, senior vice president of planning and research at CBS, said all three networks would welcome other rival companies into the fray. "We welcome AGB's interest. It is one of the few companies that has the resources to compete with Nielsen. But we're not committed to it," he said.

The networks plan to replace Nielsen, which has had

the market to itself for 30 years, after auditioning rival and parallel systems during "an experimentation phase" in the 1991-92 season, said Mr Poltrack. AGB will take part in this process with several other companies, one of which is understood to be Arbitron, the American company which measures local viewing audiences.

By September 1992, a new system will be in place, run either by one of the entrants or Nielsen itself, said Mr Poltrack. "It would be unproductive to have two duplicate systems," he said.

Nielsen, part of Dun & Bradstreet, clashed with the three networks after volatile and unexplained shifts in audience patterns last year meant the stations had to give back between \$100 million and \$200 million to advertisers in free airtime.

American advertisers pay a year in advance for advertising time starting each September. In exchange they are guaranteed a specific target audience. If the networks fail

to deliver those viewers to advertisers, expected to spend \$4.4 billion this year, they are forced to give advertisers free airtime as a penalty.

Nielsen, which receives \$15 million each year from the three networks combined, is roughly 30 to 40 per cent of its total revenue, changed its audience tracking in 1987 to use a peoplometer - a system AGB attempted to introduce in the same year. The meter relies on 4,000 sample households pushing buttons to show who watches what and the networks believe viewers have become bored with the task, rendering ratings inadequate.

"The most glaring example came from the daytime soap audiences, among the most loyal of all women viewers aged between 18 and 49. Last February the rating showed a million of these had just turned off. We don't think that's possible."

AGB, which claims it can track households not using the system and connect it into replacement homes, failed three years ago under its

former ownership to enter the American market, losing \$67 million after only CBS signed up.

The US networks, whose audiences are falling amid growing competition from cable TV, want to abandon the guaranteed audience system and are now in talks with advertisers and agencies seeking a common ground for new measurement.

Fox Broadcasting, owned by The News Corporation, which owns The Times, said it will continue with the traditional system of guaranteed viewing levels. Its network programmes will be increased from three to five nights a week from the autumn and American industry experts say the \$350 million Fox received in advance revenue last year could easily double.

Mr Poltrack said the committee on national television audience measurement, which is composed of representatives from the television networks and advertising industry, would hear proposals from AGB soon.

Quilgotti down in first year on USM

By MARTIN BARROW

QUILGOTTI, the manufacturer of terrazzo tiles, suffered a near-12 per cent fall in taxable profits from £2.34 million to £2.07 million during the 12 months to ending March, the company's first full year on the Unlisted Securities Market.

The downturn in the construction industry caused a deterioration in earnings during the second half of the year. At the interim stage the company returned pre-tax profits 12 per cent ahead at £1.2 million.

Earnings per share fell 23 per cent from 5.7p to 4.4p. The company is paying a final dividend of 1.44p a share, making a total of 2.2p, up 10 per cent from the notional dividend of 2p for 1989.

Profits slipped despite a 15 per cent increase in turnover from £17.75 million to £20.45 million.

Gerard Quilgotti, managing director, said that margins held up well in hard flooring, the smaller fire-surfacing divisions had suffered as a result of the weak housing market.

In February, Quilgotti Inc, the company's newly formed American subsidiary, acquired 80 per cent of Associated Imports, an importer of ceramic tiles from Mexico and Brazil for distribution in America, and purchased a tile factory in Lancaster, Texas, which is expected to be in use by spring 1991.

Quilgotti shares were unchanged at 58p, against last year's placing price of 52p.



Expanding: Takare's Pritchard, left, and Bradshaw

Growing Takare in £18.8m cash call

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

TAKARE, the nursing homes group, is raising £18.8 million by an open offer so as to further its expansion plans. It has forecast pre-tax profits for this year of £4.15 million, an increase of 97 per cent.

The offer is on the basis of two new shares for every seven existing shares at 550p a share. Takare shares were unchanged at 560p yesterday. The group operates 1,245 beds and plans to add 1,140 more in addition to 660 started last year. An increasing number of beds are contracted to health authorities.

The group's founders, Keith

Bradshaw and Deverok Pritchard, hold 50 per cent, but are not taking up their entitlement under the offer. These shares have been placed by de Zoete and Bevan with institutional shareholders, including the merchant bank Singer & Friedlander, which will own 29.9 per cent of Takare but have voting rights for only 20.5 per cent. Mr Bradshaw and Mr Pritchard will own 36 per cent, but have voting rights for 46 per cent.

The group forecasts earnings this year of 27.6p, up 52 per cent, with dividends of 4.3p, up 59 per cent.

HK lawyer admits charge of corruption

From LULU YU IN HONG KONG

WARWICK REID, a senior government lawyer who headed the commercial crime unit of the Hong Kong legal department, yesterday admitted a charge of corruption under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance.

The 42-year-old principal Crown Counsel, who once oversaw prosecution in Hong Kong's business community, admitted having assets deemed disproportionate to his pay. The assets included NZ\$2.43 million (£840,000) in bank balances and three tracts of property in his native New Zealand.

The offence carries a maximum penalty of ten years in prison and a HK\$100,000 (£7,500) fine. Assets involved may be confiscated.

J. M. Meredith, the magistrate presiding in the case, ordered that Reid be held in custody pending sentence in the High Court.

Earlier, three private lawyers and a former banker were charged by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, with offences involving Reid.

Two of the lawyers, Eddie So and Oscar Lai, are alleged to have offered Reid between HK\$15 million and HK\$20 million in return for assistance in criminal proceedings against their client, Ronald Li, former chairman of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, who faces corruption charges relating to share listings. Mr Li, whose case is yet to come trial, has not been accused of offering Reid bribes.

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS

	Call				Put					Call				Put				
Series	Jul	Oct	Jan	Jul	Oct	Jan	Jul	Oct	Jan	Jul	Oct	Jan	Jul	Oct	Jan	Jul	Oct	Jan
Abd Lyon (500)	480	52	82	15	9	12							180	38	52	2	3	
Abd Lyon (500)	500	19	43	58	54	57							200	19	43	58	54	
Abd Lyon (500)	520	13	35	54	57	57							220	8	18	25	15	
Abd Lyon (500)	540	10	28	45	54	57							240	7	15	22	15	
Abd Lyon (500)	560	8	21	36	45	54							260	5	12	15	18	
Abd Lyon (500)	580	6	14	27	36	45							280	4	9	12	15	
Abd Lyon (500)	600	4	8	18	27	36							300	3	6	9	12	
Abd Lyon (500)	620	3	3	9	18	27							320	2	3	6	9	
Abd Lyon (500)	640	2	0	0	0	0							340	1	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	660	1	0	0	0	0							360	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	680	0	0	0	0	0							380	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	700	0	0	0	0	0							400	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	720	0	0	0	0	0							420	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	740	0	0	0	0	0							440	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	760	0	0	0	0	0							460	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	780	0	0	0	0	0							480	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	800	0	0	0	0	0							500	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	820	0	0	0	0	0							520	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	840	0	0	0	0	0							540	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	860	0	0	0	0	0							560	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	880	0	0	0	0	0							580	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	900	0	0	0	0	0							600	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	920	0	0	0	0	0							620	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	940	0	0	0	0	0							640	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	960	0	0	0	0	0							660	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	980	0	0	0	0	0							680	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1000	0	0	0	0	0							700	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1020	0	0	0	0	0							720	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1040	0	0	0	0	0							740	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1060	0	0	0	0	0							760	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1080	0	0	0	0	0							780	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1100	0	0	0	0	0							800	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1120	0	0	0	0	0							820	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1140	0	0	0	0	0							840	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1160	0	0	0	0	0							860	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1180	0	0	0	0	0							880	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1200	0	0	0	0	0							900	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1220	0	0	0	0	0							920	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1240	0	0	0	0	0							940	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1260	0	0	0	0	0							960	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1280	0	0	0	0	0							980	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1300	0	0	0	0	0							1000	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1320	0	0	0	0	0							1020	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1340	0	0	0	0	0							1040	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1360	0	0	0	0	0							1060	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1380	0	0	0	0	0							1080	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1400	0	0	0	0	0							1100	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1420	0	0	0	0	0							1120	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1440	0	0	0	0	0							1140	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1460	0	0	0	0	0							1160	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1480	0	0	0	0	0							1180	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1500	0	0	0	0	0							1200	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1520	0	0	0	0	0							1220	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1540	0	0	0	0	0							1240	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1560	0	0	0	0	0							1260	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1580	0	0	0	0	0							1280	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1600	0	0	0	0	0							1300	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1620	0	0	0	0	0							1320	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1640	0	0	0	0	0							1340	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1660	0	0	0	0	0							1360	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1680	0	0	0	0	0							1380	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1700	0	0	0	0	0							1400	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1720	0	0	0	0	0							1420	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1740	0	0	0	0	0							1440	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1760	0	0	0	0	0							1460	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1780	0	0	0	0	0							1480	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1800	0	0	0	0	0							1500	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1820	0	0	0	0	0							1520	0	0	0	0	
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Abd Lyon (500)	1900	0	0	0	0	0							1600	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1920	0	0	0	0	0							1620	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	1940	0	0	0	0	0							1640	0	0	0	0	
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Abd Lyon (500)	1980	0	0	0	0	0							1680	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2000	0	0	0	0	0							1700	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2020	0	0	0	0	0							1720	0	0	0	0	
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Abd Lyon (500)	2080	0	0	0	0	0							1780	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2100	0	0	0	0	0							1800	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2120	0	0	0	0	0							1820	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2140	0	0	0	0	0							1840	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2160	0	0	0	0	0							1860	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2180	0	0	0	0	0							1880	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2200	0	0	0	0	0							1900	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2220	0	0	0	0	0							1920	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2240	0	0	0	0	0							1940	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2260	0	0	0	0	0							1960	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2280	0	0	0	0	0							1980	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2300	0	0	0	0	0							2000	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2320	0	0	0	0	0							2020	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2340	0	0	0	0	0							2040	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2360	0	0	0	0	0							2060	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2380	0	0	0	0	0							2080	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2400	0	0	0	0	0							2100	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2420	0	0	0	0	0							2120	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2440	0	0	0	0	0							2140	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2460	0	0	0	0	0							2160	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2480	0	0	0	0	0							2180	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2500	0	0	0	0	0							2200	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2520	0	0	0	0	0							2220	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2540	0	0	0	0	0							2240	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2560	0	0	0	0	0							2260	0	0	0	0	
Abd Lyon (500)	2580	0	0	0	0	0												

Opening Times:
 & 29th June 10am-5pm
 June 10am-4pm

And Other Cheng Yi

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FOREIGN EXCHANGES

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LONDON FRANCHISE

	High	Low	Close	Vol
Previous open nearest	2387			
55-14	87.20	87.10	87.10	30
55-14	89.64	89.70	89.70	20
Previous open nearest	9453			
55-14	92.28	92.20	92.20	30
55-14	94.31	95.04	95.04	20
Previous open nearest	2367			
55-14	92.28	92.20	92.20	30
55-14	94.31	95.04	95.04	20
Previous open nearest	9453			
55-14	92.28	92.20	92.20	30
55-14	94.31	95.04	95.04	20
Previous open nearest	2387			
55-14	87.20	87.10	87.10	30
55-14	89.64	89.70	89.70	20

EXCHANGE	month	Vol
0-1452.0	547775	
0-5342.0	56575	
0-1625.0	139450	
0-5910.0	10075	
0-1564.0	356125	
0-5650.0	19914	

LIVESTOCK COMMISSION	month	Vol
105.92	143.29	105.03
-1.30	-16.82	-2.04
-1.26	-21.77	-1.6
105.92	143.29	104.94
-1.30	-16.82	-2.04
-1.26	-21.77	-1.6
n/a	146.59	102.94
n/a	148.48	-0.54

ECGD
Rate Sterling Export Finance. Make-up day: May

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28 81 90 82 28 236

CHANGE		
day	Rudolf Wolff	
month	Vol	
0-1452.0	647775	
0-1452.0	56575	
0-1625.0	131000	
0-6310.0	10405	
0-1564.0	356125	
0-8650.0	19914	

LIVESTOCK COMMISSION		
Stock prices at representative markets on June 20		
	Pig	Cattle
	105.92	149.39
	-1.39	-15.63
	+20.0	+21.7
	105.92	149.53
	-1.38	-16.87
	n/a	+37.9
	n/a	148.59
	n/a	-16.48

SHORTS **ג' - ג' =**
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PLATINUM

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began June 11. Dealings end tomorrow. \$Contango day June 25. Settlement day July 2.
\$Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Portfolio

PLATINUM

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DAILY DIVIDEND
£2.000

Claims required for +38 points

Claimants should ring 0254-53272

[illegible]

BRITISH FUNDS

15	915	30	Chrysler	72	90	2	
16	132	30	Chrysler	72	90	2	
17	132	30	Chrysler	72	90	2	
18	220	30	Chrysler	72	90	2	
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161	1.3	189	140	Angier Water	151	164
162	1.3	190	140	Angier Water	171	174
163	24.6	191	172	North West	149	151
23.2	34.2	192	125	South West	149	149
		193	125	South West	158	162
		194	141	South West	162	168
	36.7	195	171	South West	162	168
		196	171	South West	162	168
1.3	11.4	197	127	Marine Water	164	169
		198	127	Marine Water	164	169
	66.7	199	127	Marine Water	164	169
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● Ex dividend f Ex all b Forecast dividend e Interim payment passed i Price a suspension g Dividend and yield exclude a special payment k Pre-merger figures a Forecast earnings o Ex other r Ex notes i Ex scrip or share split t Tax-free ... No significant data

071-481 4481

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To Director of Corporate Development

City

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We currently have an opportunity for a well-presented Secretary to work for our Director of Corporate Development and Planning. The position will encompass the full range of secretarial duties in addition to the provision of administrative support for the Compliance function and the efficient maintenance of research material.

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Strong organisational ability, enthusiasm and commitment, the ability to work well under pressure and use initiative, confidence and a smart appearance are essential attributes to succeed in this challenging role.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Why scientists are painting the sky red

The big magnetic storm of 1989 disrupted communications world-wide. Now scientists are to join together to provide a more rapid warning of future storms. Nina Morgan reports

Mike Hapgood is praying for some good magnetic storms this summer. According to Bill Stuart he should be in luck. The two scientists are at the leading edge of British research into different aspects of a phenomenon that has a major influence on the world's environment but that is not well understood.

They both hope for some dramatic revelations from exploration by the Combined Release and Radiation Effects Satellite (CRRES), which will include an experiment to "paint" huge, but temporary, celestial murals by turning a large section of the magnetic envelope surrounding the Earth into vast clouds of green, red, blue and yellow particles.

Dr Stuart leads a group at the British Geological Survey (BGS), in Edinburgh, which is pioneering methods for forecasting magnetic storms and fluctuations in the Earth's magnetic field, comparable to but providing a more rapid warning of disturbances than the daily weather bulletins.

Up-to-the-minute forecasts can now be flashed worldwide via the recently created Geomagnetism Information and Forecasting Service (GIFS). On the assumption that the storm of March 12-13, 1989, lasting 36 hours, was one of the three most severe recorded, cutting electricity supplies to six million people in Quebec, after a voltage surge that tipped regulators, halted a nuclear power station for 42 hours for safety reasons and disrupted communications world-wide. The effects of the storm were also felt in space.

Bombardment by radiation and particles from the Sun increases the density of the Earth's atmosphere, slowing satellites and throwing them from their planned orbits for an earlier return to Earth. Satellite monitoring stations in the United States temporarily lost track of 1,500 satellites in just a few hours. For people living in southern England and other places in mid-latitudes, the magnetic storm provided rare and spectacular displays of aurora.

Compass needles deviate from magnetic north in violent storms, posing a hazard for navigators. As David Carrington reports, during the 1989 storm the compass needle in the BGS magnetic observatory in Lerwick in the Shetlands swung an unprecedented 8 degrees. He explains: "People still use compasses in various ways and that extends to people in the oil business drilling holes in the North Sea. They want to know where the holes are going, so they use magnetic reference to find out."

Even the most sophisticated satellite-based navigation systems, such as the latest Global Positioning System (GPS) established freely for international use by the US, are not immune from the effects of magnetic storms induced by solar bursts. Though the satellites orbit high enough to escape the effects of drag during storms forcing them to Earth, the accuracy of measurements made by the network depends on the precise timing of radio signals sent from the satellites.

Changes in the ionosphere during magnetic disruption causes tiny but crucial delays in the transmission of signals. In addition to the short-term chaos resulting from dramatic changes in the Earth's magnetic field, navigators must also consider the effects of longer-term, or so-called secular, variation of the Earth's field, which in the future will eventually involve a complete reversal of the magnetic field, with north becoming south and vice versa.

Secular variation is attributed to changes in the Earth's interior, where heat and density-driven convection currents cause the molten nickel-iron alloy in the Earth's core to circulate, providing a self-exciting geodynamo to create the planet's magnetic field. But there is evidence that the geodynamo is changing. Long-term trends have been unravelled in the Earth's magnetic field covering at least a thousand years. The most reliable direct measurements have been taken for more than 300 years.

Data analysed by Jeremy Bloxham of Harvard University and David Gubbins of Leeds University indicate that the Earth's magnetic field is slowly drifting westwards. This motion is reflected in changes in magnetic declination, the clockwise angle between the direction a compass needle points (magnetic north) and geographical north.

Today, in London, the declination is roughly five degrees to the west. But because of the motion in the Earth's core, compass needles are gradually moving back towards true north at a rate of around one degree every eight years. Over the past 400 years measurements made in London indicate that the declination has varied from east to west and back again for a total of more than 40 degrees of change.

Measurements of the intensity show that the strength of the Earth's magnetic field has decayed by about seven per cent since 1845. Although, in the words of Mr Carrington of the BGS, the decreasing intensity of the Earth's magnetic field is "a bit like global warming, if you don't measure it for long enough you can't be too sure what you are seeing, whether it is going to go up again". Many geologists believe the trend is downwards.

In the geological past weakening of the magnetic field has preceded a reversal, or change in polarity of the field, so that north would become south. Polarity changes are relatively common events in the geological record. There have been at least nine major polarity changes over the past 3.6 million years, and the most recent occurred about 500,000 years ago. According to Mr Gubbins, reversals happen on average every 300,000 years, so one is long overdue. He estimates that if the decrease in magnetic intensity carries on at its present rate, a reversal could occur in about a thousand years from now.

Although a thousand years is an instant in geological terms, in human terms it is a long time away. The effects of sudden magnetic storms threaten us every day and, according to Dr Stuart of the BGS, the disturbances are not over yet.

Some scientists believe that the level of solar activity has been gradually increasing over the past 400 years and that the

present high level of activity may be part of this trend. In fact, the 1989 magnetic storms are the result of one of the strongest episodes of solar activity since 1957. Every sunspot cycle, during which the number and size of sunspots vary from a minimum to a maximum and back again, lasts for around 11 years. The current cycle, forecast to be one of the greatest, is now approaching its maximum. This means that we can expect a number of big magnetic storms over the next one or two years.

Although we cannot do anything to alter these potentially dangerous variations in the Earth's magnetic field, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. This is why many countries have set up observatories to monitor solar activity.

GIFS offers a daily forecast of the level of geomagnetic activity in Europe. Although the service is aimed at professional users, it can also be used by the public. GIFS is available free to users of the Joint Academic Network (JANET) computer system and can be accessed via British Telecom's computer link network. Those without a computer can contact the Geomagnetism Research Group

by telephone (031-667 1000) during office hours. Recently, the GIFS service has been upgraded so that commercial users can receive updates.

The GIFS forecasts draw extensively on data from the UK magnetic observatories at Llandudno in North Wales, Eskdalemuir in southern Scotland and Lerwick in the Shetlands. Data collection at the UK observatories is controlled by on-site computers, which are linked by telephone to the British Geological Survey offices in Edinburgh. The real-time data sent from the observatories to Edinburgh is used to provide forecast information within minutes.

To pursue the goal of rapid communication of data from the observatories to a small number of central processing and control centres, scientists in the US, Canada, France and the UK have begun a joint programme, known as Intermagnet, which aims to communicate observatory data in real-time by satellite to three or four communication nodes, which will collect and process the data automatically and supply indices and forecasts to users.

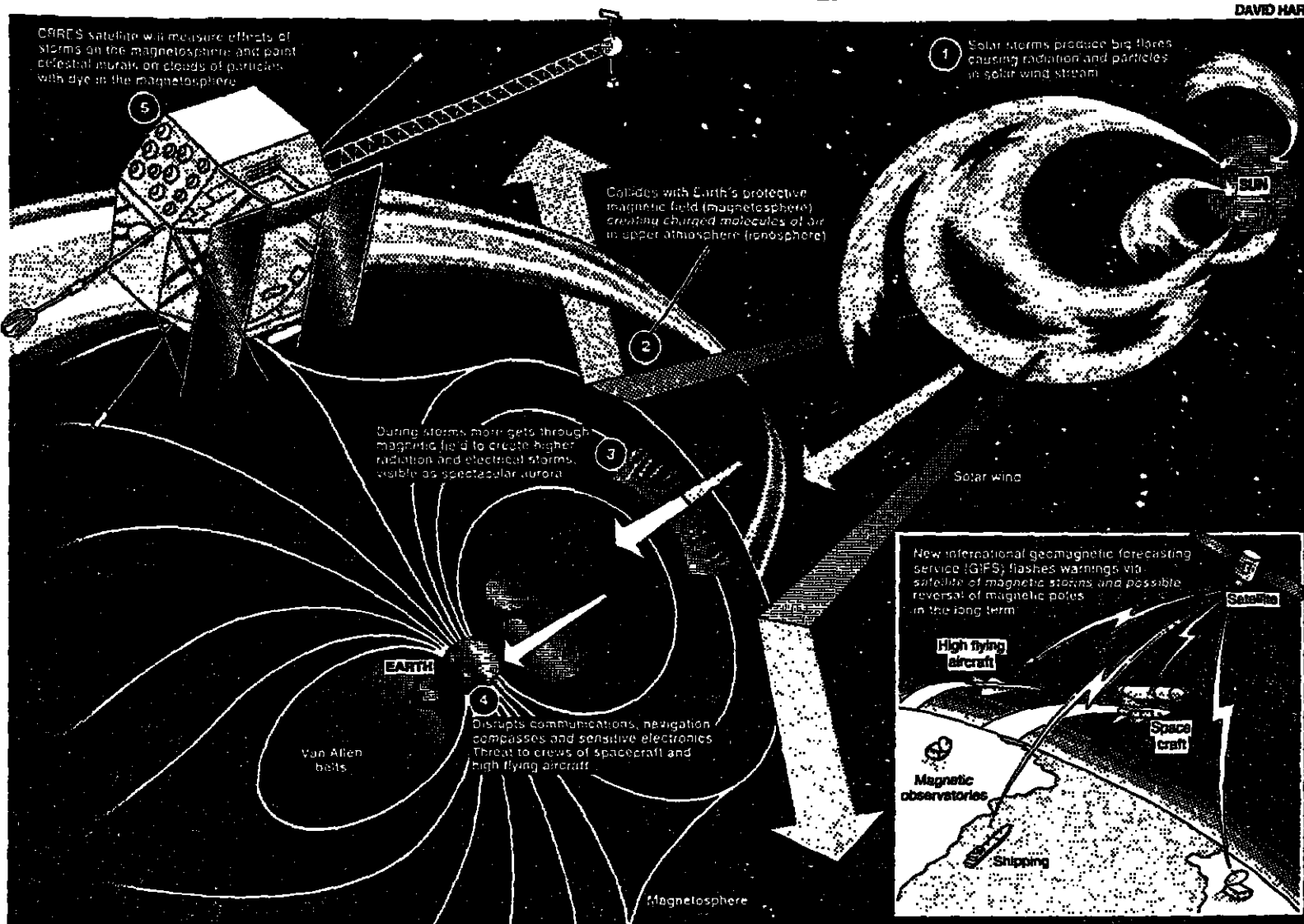
This process has already begun in Britain. All the UK observatories transmit their data every 12 minutes to the US weather satellite, GOES, which in turn transmits it to receivers in the US and Canada. In addition, the Harland observatory in the UK has been fitted with a satellite dish to allow it to receive magnetic data via GOES from the Boulder, Colorado and Fredericksburg, Virginia, observatories in the US, and the Ottawa observatory, Canada.

This summer the BGS hopes to install similar communication links with other European observatories via the European and African weather satellite, Meteosat. Within the next two years it hopes to be in full communication with magnetic observatories in France, Finland, Spain, Hungary and South Africa.

The eventual aim is to link all the world observatories by Intermagnet. The programme co-ordinators, the BGS and the US Geological Survey, expect to link more than a hundred observatories using standardised equipment by the end of the century. With the help of automatic computer programs, this global view of geomagnetic disturbances will lead to more accurate forecasts.

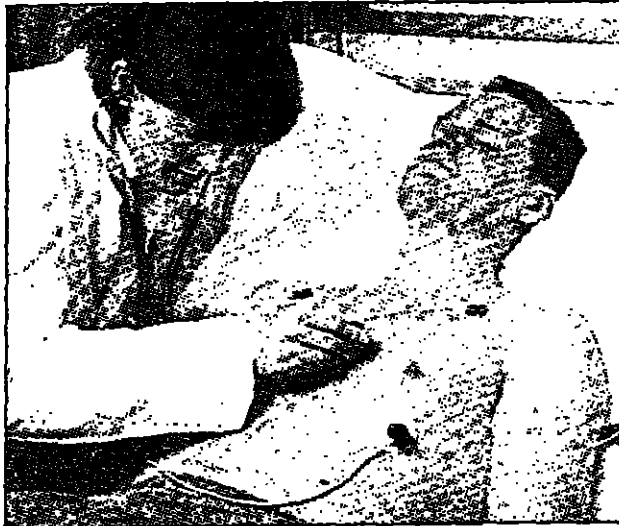
As for the next year or so, in view of the present solar cycle maximum, Dr Stuart has some good news and some bad news. First the bad news: the forecast for the geomagnetic field is decidedly stormy, and "as far as major storms are concerned we have to keep looking at the Sun, and that's not much more than an inspired guess".

And the good news? "At this part of the solar cycle, solar activity regions persist for some rotations, so you can watch them, see them develop and you get a very good forecast of when they are coming round again. So you know that such and such couple of days are days when there is likely to be something happening."



Drug tests on humans first

Volunteers are to be used as guinea pigs for drug research at a new London medical unit, Pearce Wright reports



A volunteer's heart beat is checked at the new unit

A unique medical research centre for making the first trials of a drug on healthy human volunteers, and for clinical trials of new treatments on patients, was opened at King's College Hospital medical school, London, yesterday. The unit, of 12 beds in three wards, each equipped with the latest microprocessor-controlled electronic monitoring and scanning instruments, has cost £1 million. The building is shared between the department of medicine of King's College Hospital and the Wellcome Foundation drug company, which paid for the building.

Two issues provide a common bond between them. One is covered by the phrase "drugs are not safe", which Alan McGregor, professor of endocrinology, says he impresses on his students. Professor McGregor describes the other as "the ethical dilemmas applicable equally to the use of well people to test new drugs and to the management of patients prepared to take part in trials of new therapies".

Only a handful of the thousands of new substances produced in every leading drug company's research laboratories reaches the first stage

of human trials. Dr John Posner, the Wellcome scientist directing the research of putting new products into man for the first time, says an initial study is usually conducted with between six and 12 volunteers. Data assessment can take a year or more.

Healthy human "guinea pig" studies of a new drug are the first mandatory trials of any potential new medicine before a pharmaceutical company applies for a licence for the drug's use from the government's committee on the safety of medicines.

Under the Medicines Act no regulations to protect volunteers cover these trials. The experimenters are expected to abide by a code proposed by the Royal College of Physicians in 1986 and get the agreement of the particular drug company's ethical committee, which should include independent medical advisers.

At the King's clinical investigation unit, all trials must also satisfy the hospital's ethical committee. Wellcome recruits well volunteers only

from its employees for trials at a centre attached to one of its research laboratories or in hospital by arrangement with one of London's big teaching hospitals.

Dr Posner says there is a strong case for studies of certain types of pharmacologically active substances, particularly those designed for cardiovascular, respiratory and anti-allergic effects, to be conducted in hospital, where a variety of expertise is at hand, especially in emergency and intensive care.

Any trials involving patients must be made with their informed consent and signed agreement and understanding, according to Professor McGregor. "Above all," he says, "they must be told they have an absolute right to refuse and their decision in no way jeopardises the future management of their illness."

He separates the ethical issues for trials with patients into three categories: treatments for which satisfactory therapies exist, unsatisfactory treatments and conditions for which there are no treatments.

He adds: "It is ethically difficult to justify stopping an effective therapy for patients in the first group just to try something new. A better case could be made more easily for trials with the other two groups."

Dr Posner says the purpose of healthy volunteer trials is to establish precisely how a drug is absorbed, distributed and broken down and the resulting by-products excreted, and what possible side-effects occur. From these findings, his group recommends abandoning the drug or showing the safe concentration that can be allowed in the blood stream without side-effects.

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Game, TV set and match

Fans who fail to get into the centre court at Wimbledon will be able to watch a whole new wall game on a huge video screen. George Cole reports

Wimbledon spectators without centre court tickets for this year's tennis championships will still be able to see the live matches on a new type of vast video display screen.

Conventional outdoor video screens are made from an array of lamps or picture tubes. The NitStar Vidiwall uses liquid crystal display (LCD) technology similar to that found on pocket televisions and calculator displays. The Nit is a unit of brightness.

Displays are assembled from a series of LCD "tiles", each measuring 35 sq cm and composed of 256 picture points or pixels, the video equivalent of the dots that make up a newspaper photograph.

Screens are constructed by slotting the tiles into a frame, and although Philips, the Dutch electronics company that developed the system, offers three standard-size displays, screens can be made to order.

Several advantages are claimed for Vidiwall over conventional video systems:

● The colour pictures are not washed out when direct sunlight shines on them.

● The tiles have a lifetime of more

than 23,000 hours, compared with the 7,000 to 10,000 hours for normal displays.

● Unlike lamps and picture tubes, LCD displays do not lose their brightness as they age.

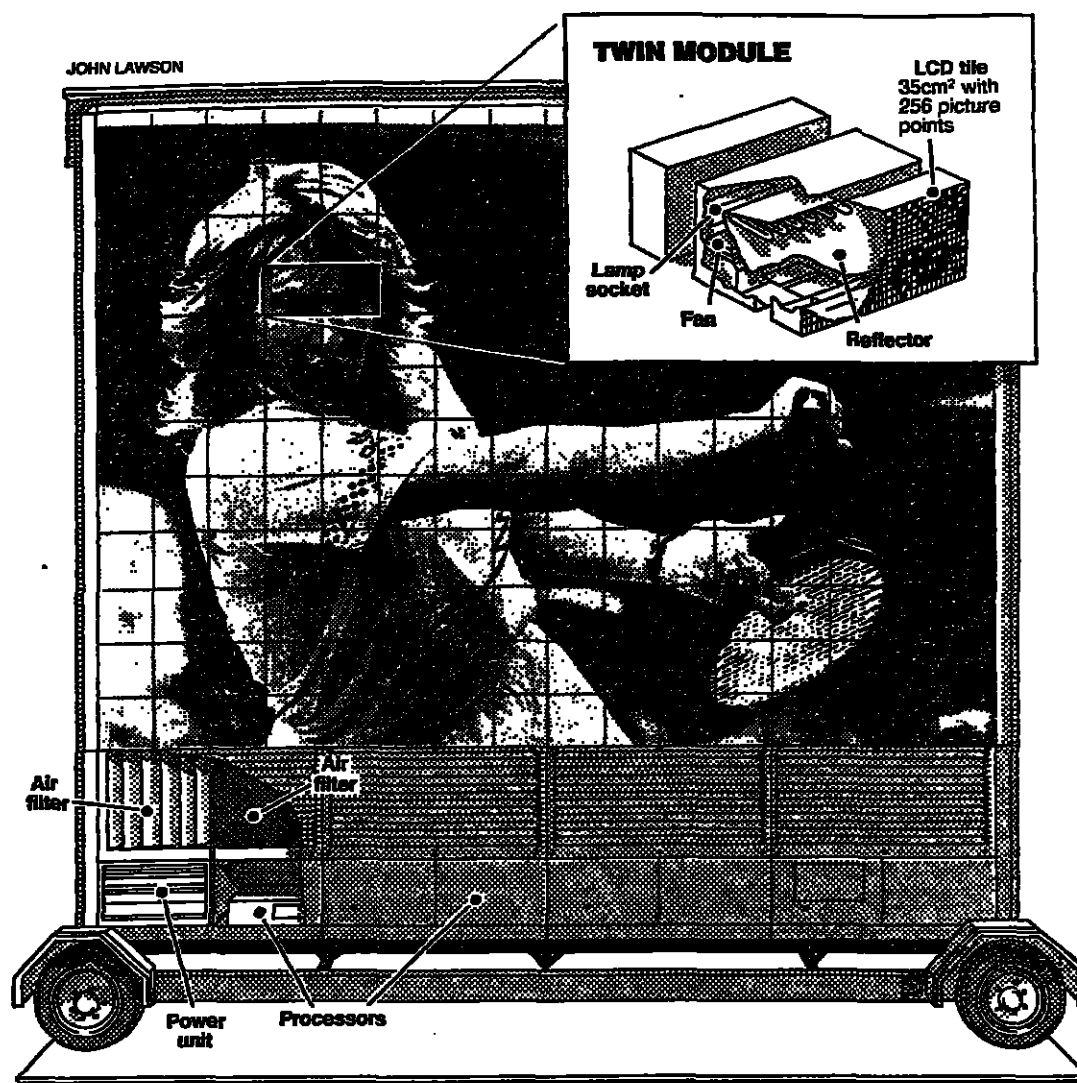
A screen costs £25,000 a square metre, which is competitive with conventional outdoor video systems. Screens can display video images from various sources and overlay them with computer-generated text or graphics.

If necessary, the system is controlled by a computer and can even be operated from a distance via telephone or data lines.

The first three displays are being set up at Wimbledon, at the ground of Dutch football team PSV Eindhoven, and outside a cinema in Antwerp, Belgium, where film trailers will be shown. The makers say the system could be used at pop concerts and for electronic bill boarding.

The company is also working on a version that will display high-definition television (HDTV) with pictures as sharp as 35mm film.

There are no plans for a domestic version. Jos Van de Loo, manager of Philips's Vidiwall division, says the equipment was designed for outdoor applications and "home systems would require an entirely different technology".



Engineering an end to dire skills shortage

By setting up links with schools and youngsters, engineering (IT) organisations are tackling a serious skills shortage at its source to ensure there are enough staff in the future.

"Switch on to Engineering", a seminar taking place today at the National Westminster Hall in London, for example, is aimed at encouraging more companies to offer jobs to school leavers before they go on to further education.

The event is the latest initiative in a line of planned events, including formal links with every school, work placements, promotional material and career books, to raise the profile of a career in technology.

The Engineering Council, to improve young people's image of the industry, has produced a new degree aimed at emphasising the interdisciplinary nature of engineering.

The council sets the standards for the training of all categories of engineers. It has 300 affiliated organisations, including the British Computer Society.

In an attempt to answer criticisms that careers in engineering can be ill-rewarded, the council points out that a quarter of all chartered engineers, the highest-qualified professional category, now earn more than £28,000 a year and one in ten earns more than £35,500 a year.

There are concerns that the industry will be harder hit than most when the demographic downturn begins to bite in the Nineties as the number of entries for A-level mathematics and sci-

JOBSCENE

ence is falling more quickly than the number of entries for A-level as a whole.

In physics, for example, Joint Matriculation Board A-level entries fell by 18 per cent between 1985 and 1987.

"Whereas Japan, with 4.7 applicants for every place, can pick and choose, in the UK there are only about as many qualified applicants as places," Professor Alan Smithers, of the University of Manchester, told a conference on engineering and higher education earlier this year.

The Engineering Council, with £612,000 from the Department of Trade and Industry, has started a project to link 1,500 engineers to 450 secondary schools. It aims to extend the scheme to 6,000 schools.

A new degree course is being piloted this year at a number of universities and polytechnics to make a career in engineering more accessible and attractive to those without traditional qualifications such as A-level physics.

The integrated engineering degree aims to give students a broad study of engineering disciplines on the grounds that most students are initially unclear which career they want to pursue.

Many large computer firms fund competitions and video awards to improve IT's image and to encourage girls to design and produce publicity material relating to a career in IT.

LESLIE TILLEY

Gene weapons in the war on diabetes

Researchers working in Britain, Japan and Australia find the same clues to an age-old problem

Research on Japanese laboratory mice predisposed to develop diabetes has shown how the human disease may be treated one day by gene therapy. Insulin-dependent, or type-1, diabetes mellitus is on the increase. It starts in childhood and there are 187,000 sufferers in Britain. According to figures from the British Diabetic Association, diabetes in all its forms cost the National Health Service an estimated £360 million in 1988 alone. The disease has severe and distressing complications and is a prime cause of blindness in the western world.

Although its exact cause is unknown, diabetes is believed to develop when the body's immune system turns against the so-called beta cells in the pancreas that produce the hormone insulin.

The immune system distinguishes between the body's own cells and an interloper, such as a

bacterium. But in auto-immune diseases such as type-1 diabetes, the system fails. More than half of all diabetes cases appear connected with recognition signposts, called HLA antigens in humans. These are molecules on the cell surfaces controlling the immune system's response to infection. Every human carries HLA antigens of several kinds, varying from person to person. Particular HLA variants are often associated with an inherited susceptibility to certain diseases.

HLA antigens are proteins, made up of smaller molecules called amino acids, joined in a

specified order. In 1987, analysing the association of HLA antigens with diabetes, researchers at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, and Stanford University, California, discovered that changing the amino acid aspartate, 57th in the chain, which researchers call asp-57, could give resistance against auto-immune diabetes. Dr Hugh McDermott, who made the discovery, and his colleagues concluded that asp-57 protects against insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, but the protection would be lost if aspartate were replaced by serine or valine, two other amino acids often found at position 57. This

conclusion was based solely on work with Caucasian patients, and direct evidence has been lacking. This is where the mice helped.

Non-obese diabetic, or NOD, mice originated in Japan from highly inbred stock in which brothers and sisters were mated for more than 20 generations and are genetically predisposed to develop an auto-immune diabetes similar to the human disease. The inbred NOD mice have recognition antigens, confusingly called MHC antigens in mice, as distinct from the human HLA. First, they lack the antigen molecule I-E present in other mice strains.

Second, they have an antigen called I-A NOD. Either could cause the disease in mice, but the I-A NOD molecule has serine, not aspartate, at position 57, which suggests a link with the work showing that aspartate might protect against diabetes in humans.

To test this, two groups reporting in this week's *Nature*—one led by Dr Ken-ichi Yamamura, of Japan's Saga Medical School, and another by Dr Jacques Miller, of the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Australia—have genetically engineered NOD mice using genes with the instructions for making I-A molecules carrying aspartate at

position 57. The researchers found the onset and scale of diabetes dramatically reduced, indicating that asp-57 is a protective. However, the artificially introduced I-A genes differ from the corresponding gene in NOD mice in more ways than just having aspartate at position 57. So there could be other aspects of the molecule that guard against diabetes.

Other experiments support this view by taking a slightly different route. The results, also in *Nature*, come from Dr Elizabeth Simpson, of the Clinical Research Centre in Harrow, London, her colleagues

Dr Torben Lund and Dr Anne Cooke, of University College London, and Dimitris Kiossis, of the National Institute for Medical Research.

They have prevented diabetes in NOD mice by introducing genes coding for I-A molecules that differ at the 56th position—the normal I-E molecules that NOD mice lack.

Researchers will still be fascinated by the 57th position amino acid, says Dr Peter Parham, a Stanford researcher, commenting in *Nature* on the findings. He thinks insulin-dependent diabetes may be a "heterogeneous collection of auto-immune diseases having a common outcome in the total destruction of pancreatic beta cells", and that work on NOD mice should shed light on at least some of these diseases.

RORY HOWLETT

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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With one of the industries most ambitious IT programmes, Campbell Foods plc is investing heavily in hardware, software and IT professionals. They have recently installed new AS400's at their computer centre in King's Lynn and are currently implementing a sophisticated network linking their sites throughout the UK.

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One of the world's tiniest creatures is a key to progress for scientists studying genetic make-ups. Gerry Woolf reports

DNA twist in the tale of a worm



Out to decode the biochemical blueprint of a tiny, obscure worm: Dr John Sulston and Alan Coulson

British scientists are embarking on a voyage of discovery which will, they hope, tell them everything there is to know about what makes an animal tick. The success of the project, a detailed analysis of a humble worm, will be vital if the international project to decipher the human genome, the blueprint each of us carries in the DNA in the nucleus of every cell of our body, is to become a reality.

The scientists, John Sulston and Alan Coulson of the Medical Research Council's laboratory of molecular biology in Cambridge, are starting a pilot project to sequence the genome, or decode the biochemical blueprint, of an obscure worm called *Caenorhabditis elegans*.

The project is being supported not only by the Medical Research Council, but by the United States National Institute of Health. The costs will be high, so why spend so much money, time and effort on trying to understand what most people would consider an insignificant creature?

The answer is that in genetic terms, the worm is a near-perfect example of an organism for the techniques the scientists want to develop if they are to gain a better knowledge of the more complicated genetic structures of humans.

You do not run before you can walk. When it comes to carrying out a programme as involved as mapping and sequencing the human genome, described a few years ago as "the handbook of man" by Sir Walter Bodmer, director of research for the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, scientists have a lot of "pre-mission training" to do.

The task of mapping and sequencing the human genome will be to determine precisely the chemical order and combinations of the four molecules that make up the three billion substances found in human DNA. These four molecules, or bases, for convenience referred to by their first letter (G for guanine, C for cytosine, A for adenine and T for thymine) are used as a biological encryption system. When several thousand letters are strung together, they form biochemical codes, which we call genes, for the creation of complete human beings.

Because deciphering the message will reveal a vast amount of information for every conceivable aspect of health care and disease prevention, the task has been given an almost Apollo moon shot mission status by the world's scientific community. The human genome project has several parallels with the Apollo mission. The expense will be enormous, the time scale lengthy and a lot of technology has to be developed and proven before the goal is reached.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) had to

embark on pilot projects before the moonshot craft vehicle was eventually created. Molecular biologists are having to develop pilot programmes to prove the technology necessary to make the project a success. Mapping and sequencing the genome of a smaller animal is the logical approach. But it is surprising how small that animal has to be. Mapping and sequencing a mouse, for example, would be almost as complex as completing the human project. Going for, say, a fiftieth of the scale means going microscopic, which is why the two

scientists in Cambridge have started to sequence a microscopic worm.

The worm contains 959 cells. It was chosen more than 20 years ago as a subject for study in great detail so scientists already know much about its development from embryo to adult. Dr Sulston says: "You would not want to sequence anything you know little about."

That is because the process of sequencing involves delicate, repetitive and downright tedious chemistry. The four molecules contained within the DNA, which can be referred to as A, C, T and G, are

linked to form a continuous chain. An individual gene consists of anything from 2,000 to 100,000 of these molecules, or bases, strung together.

A group of substances known as restriction enzymes can be used as "chemical scissors" to cut the whole DNA molecule into smaller pieces. These individual enzymes not only provide small pieces of DNA to work with, they tell which of the four molecules was on each side of the cut.

These fragments are then separated by a technique known as

electrophoresis. The end product can be "read" by either a person and, more recently, a machine. For the past few years, Dr Sulston and Mr Coulson have been obtaining large fragments of the worm's DNA and storing them in bacteria and yeast. They also keep a map on computer of the fragments, which number 20,000.

What they hope to achieve over the next three years is establishment of the most cost-effective ways of analysing fragments base by base. Evaluating the sequence-reading machines will be part of this task. The chemicals involved in sequencing are expensive and methods have to be found for cost containment.

The project management techniques that are developed should help to make the human genome project more affordable. Because of the degree of overlap, or similarity, between the worm DNA fragments, as little as 10 per cent of them will need to be sequenced to get a complete sequence detail. It will probably cost millions of dollars.

The real excitement of the work comes not from merely generating vast quantities of data but comparing worm sequence data with other sequences obtained from a variety of living things, which is known as looking for homologies. Two giant data banks, one in the United States and one in Europe, already hold perhaps 30 million bases of sequence data from plants and animals.

Making speedy comparisons between what has just been sequenced and what has already been sequenced will push computing technology to its limits, with the database set to grow by perhaps a million bases, which are the fundamental chemical units from which the DNA is assembled.

Specialists other than biochemists are being drawn to the project because the analysis of sequence data is essentially unravelling evolution itself. Some extraordinary homologies have been found in other work. For example, a piece of DNA found in ordinary yeast is a perfect match for two genes found in the AIDS virus. Dr Sulston and Mr Coulson believe much similarity will be found in the ways genes are constructed in both their microscopic worm and in man. And although reading the handbook of the worm is not going to cure man's ills overnight, it is likely to make a contribution in the medium term. The project could take as little as 10 years to complete, but science will not be the rate-limiting factor.

Dr Sulston says: "More than anything else, we will be dependent on how strong western economies will remain and how well our funding keeps pace with costs over the next few years."

Fusion 'fraud'



THE magazine Science, the official journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the leading American scientific journal, reports "worries about possible fraud" by a prominent laboratory that gave support to the discovery of a room-temperature nuclear fusion process at Utah University last year that might produce a cheap, almost endless source of energy.

This is the first public suggestion that fraud may have tainted some of the dramatic results announced last year in that field. The allegations centre on results from a laboratory at Texas A&M University, whose work for more than a year has been cited as supporting evidence of the discovery of such a nuclear process.

East joins East

SCIENCE in Europe is growing more influential as increasing numbers of top researchers from different countries collaborate with one another, according to a study published last week.

The trend, which is expected to accelerate as political changes sweep the researchers of eastern Europe into the scientific mainstream, is being heralded in Europe as helping its industries to compete more aggressively with the United States and east Asian nations. The study was carried out in the United States by Research Inc., a science analysis company in Haddon Heights, New Jersey, for the European Commission.

Nasa's nightmare



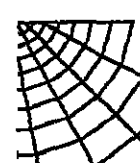
WEEKS after its launching, the Hubble space telescope is giving controllers and engineers nightmares as they struggle to overcome difficulties with equipment.

All will eventually go well, scientists and officials say, but the \$1.5 billion (£882 million) telescope will probably not be ready for operation until the end of the year and may not fulfill expectations. The two most serious malfunctions are the frequent loss

BRIEFING

of contact with guide stars and the upsetting vibrations caused when the spacecraft passes from night to day. Jean Olivier, deputy director of the Hubble project, last week sought to assure scientists at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society that the general condition of the spacecraft is excellent, and all of its malfunctions are understood and "resolvable".

Tricks of the trade



BARS, crosses and zigzags that common garden spiders weave into their webs do not look like flowers to people, but they may to insects. The designs are suggestive of patterns reflected from many flowers in ultraviolet light, not visible to humans but irresistible to insects that feed on nectar and pollen.

In the journal Ecology, the researchers, Catherine L. Craig, an assistant professor of biology at Yale University, and Gary D. Bernard, an affiliate professor of electrical engineering at the University of Washington, report that some spiders weave their webs from silk that reflects little ultraviolet light, and then add the designs to the web with silk that strongly reflects such light. Decorated webs with the spiders present captured more than 50 per cent more insects than the undecorated webs.

Satellite squabble



THE most expensive environmental research project ever mounted by the US federal government is being challenged by Earth scientists who fear that it will compromise and distort the collection of data that is critically important to understanding how the global environment is changing.

The \$30 billion project is the Earth Observing System (Eos), an elaborate array of six 15-ton satellites, remote sensors and new data-handling systems being planned by Nasa to learn how the global environment functions and is altered by human activity.

The critics' chief concern is that Eos is channelling resources away from other studies of the Earth's atmosphere that are just as essential to understanding how it works.

PEARCE WRIGHT

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Continued on next page

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An ancient bone to pick over

This fossil face could be the best evidence yet that the line leading to humans was already distinct ten million years ago. But then again, maybe not. As with anything to do with the roots of humanity, opinion looks set to outstrip the evidence as researchers argue over every tiny feature on these, the rarest of fossil bones.

The face was found in September in the red sandstone of Macedonia in northern Greece. According to its discoverer, Dr Louis de Bonis, from the University of Poitiers, France, and his colleagues in Paris and Thessaloniki, it is the best specimen yet found of an ape-like animal known as *Ouranopithecus macedoniensis*.

Until now, the existence of this species was only known from jaws and teeth. Dr de Bonis and his team think the new find is good enough to show that *Ouranopithecus* was the direct ancestor of *Australopithecus*, the immediate ancestor (or first cousin) of *Homo*. This conclusion hangs on a knife-edge interpretation detailed in today's issue of *Nature* magazine. But other researchers will be quick to differ.

One of the problems, according to Dr Peter Andrews, of the Natural History Museum, is that *Ouranopithecus* was just one of several similar ape-like creatures hanging around the forests of the Miocene period ten million years ago. Researchers are still unsure which of these Miocene apes - if any - gave rise to the human line.

Before 1980, many people thought the ancestry of humanity could be traced to *Ramapithecus*, a Miocene ape from the Indian subcontinent. As better fossils were discovered, it became clear that

Henry Gee reports on a controversy sparked by the discovery of a unique fossil skull last year in Greece

Ramapithecus and another form, *Sivapithecus*, were the same thing, and more likely to be offshoots of the hominid stem rather than direct ancestors of human beings. Current thinking places *Sivapithecus* with the ancestors of the orang-utan instead.

A second problem, apart from the diversity of Miocene apes, is that for the period between the Miocene and the Upper Pliocene - an interval of six or seven million years - the evidence, slender at best, almost peters out altogether. So it is impossible to get any after-the-fact clues about which of the Miocene forms can be linked by ancestry with the African apes (the gorilla and chimpanzee) and humanity.

Researchers have picked up the thread at between three or four million years ago, when the presence of early forms of *Australopithecus* heralds the arrival of the human family.

Given all these problems, why do Dr de Bonis and his team choose *Ouranopithecus*? The answer lies, as it so often does with fossil hominids, in the teeth. Like *Homo* and *Australopithecus*, but unlike modern and fossil apes, the fossil's canine teeth are quite small. Male canines are usually much larger than those of females, and using what is known about *Ouranopithecus* teeth from other speci-



Roots of humanity? Opinion on this skull may outstrip the evidence

mens, the researchers assert that the new skull once belonged to a male.

It is on this basis they propose *Ouranopithecus* as a direct ancestor of *Homo* and *Australopithecus*, and that it must have lived some time after African apes diverged from the

hominid line. If this is true, it means that apes and humans parted company (in evolutionary terms) at least ten million years ago.

Many researchers will find this hard to swallow: molecular evidence puts the divergence date

much later than this, between five and eight million years ago.

Dr Andrews finds room for doubt in this interpretation. For one thing, canine tooth size is variable and the specimen might be a female, which would have had smaller canines irrespective of its evolutionary heritage.

Second, the new fossil is a bit of a mixture of primitive features found in many monkeys and all apes. As well, it has characteristics linking it with *Homo*, *Australopithecus* and the African apes, but not the orang-utan.

This suite of features leaves room for two other views about where *Ouranopithecus* fits in the scheme of things, apart from that espoused by the researchers who dug up the new fossil.

First, it could fit in the hominid line immediately after the divergence of *Sivapithecus* and the rest of the orang-utan line. This would fit in with what is known about the fossil's age, but implies that it was the ancestor of African apes as well as the human family, and not just the latter.

Second, it seems in some respects so primitive that it could be ancestral to all the great apes, including the orang-utan. If this is true, it is odd (although not inconceivable) that such a primitive animal was around at such a late date, retaining its primitive features while living alongside its more advanced orang-like cousin *Sivapithecus*.

Whatever the outcome, palaeo-anthropologists will be picking over this bone for some time to come.

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Award for advance in cancer research



A statistical breakthrough: scientist Sir David Cox

A BRITISH statistician, Sir David Cox, has shared an award for advances in cancer research with three molecular biologists honoured for their ground-breaking discoveries (Pearce Wright reports).

A personal award of £60,000 was made to Sir David, a Fellow of the Royal Society, Nuffield College, Oxford, by the Cancer Research Foundation, established by General Motors in New York. An additional £18,000 was awarded to fund scientific workshops.

Sir David's pioneering invention was a statistical method that solved the enormous practical problems of analysing complex data from clinical trials by providing more reliable assessments of new treatments. The award comes at a critical period in clinical trials, with growing pressure, particularly from Aids patients, for swifter trials and short cuts in testing new drugs that promise a treatment for intractable conditions. The Cox model also allows early detection of harmful effects, described in a

landmark paper, "Regression models and life-tables", published in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*.

Before the method was available, scientists made assumptions about patient survival time, a process sometimes leading to erroneous conclusions. Scientists can now evaluate data accurately when, naturally, they do not know how long all of the patients will live after the study is completed. Sir David's model allows reliable analysis of data without the assumptions. Medical investigators can assess and rank with accuracy the effects of treatment and other factors on the results of clinical trials.

Sir David shares the awards with Dr Webster Cavenee, McGill University, Dr Raymond White, University of Utah, for the first proof of cancer-prevention genes; and Dr Mark Ptashne, of Harvard, who discovered a genetic switch that regulates genes in a simple organism and showed that the same principles apply all along the evolutionary ladder.

Live mutants lead to red faces

A new testing method may improve performance standards of computers

SOFTWARE developers in both Europe and America have a poor reputation for testing computer systems. These are often handed over for testing by the customer - the re-working and re-testing required to bring a system up to scratch can cost as much as half the original development budget.

Poor testing has also resulted in problems in systems that require high safety levels - including those in the defence sector. Many individual and company reputations have been lost because of poorly tested software.

The problem is that testers have little idea how thorough their test data is. Now a radical technique, developed in the United States, promises to provide hard-pressed man-

agers with techniques which will show how good their system tests are.

The testing of new computer systems has two features which make it one of the most difficult and error-prone activities in a software project. First, it is labour intensive, boring and, hence, error-prone. Second, it is a vital activity: a poorly tested system can cost a software developer millions of pounds in re-working costs if errors are found during the operation of the system.

System testing involves the derivation of test data, most of which checks out the func-

tioning of a system at the end of a project. It is a preliminary activity to acceptance testing: the process where the customer checks a system out with his tests before accepting it for use. The main aim of system testing is to ensure that acceptance testing will not prove an embarrassment.

Development staff prepare a large number of files containing test data which are then processed by the developed system, running on the target computer. Each test is checked by quality assurance staff and, on successful completion of the tests, the system is signed off as ready for acceptance testing.

The new technique relies on the creation of mutants. These are versions of the system to be tested, and are created by inserting a single artificial error into the original system by means of a special piece of software. During system testing the mutants are executed

with the system test data which is considered deficient if, after the completion of mutation testing, some mutants remain "alive".

What has happened is that the living mutants have given the same test responses that the original system has given to the test data. In effect, the test data has been unable to distinguish between the system and versions of the system into which an artificial error has been introduced. If they give a test result different from the original system, the tester is said to have killed the mutant.

The idea behind mutation

testing is not new. However, its implementation over the past decade has been seriously hampered by a lack of computer power. Mutation testing can generate a vast number of mutants, and conventional computers are unable to cope with the execution of this number of versions of a system.

Research carried out at Purdue University in Indiana in the United States has shown that efficient mutation testing can now be carried out on computers with a large number of multi-processors. Cheap versions of these computers are available from computer manufacturers, including Cray and Control Data, and Active Memory Technology, of the UK.

DARREL INCE

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Continued From Previous Page



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Scientists are putting plant-based materials to better uses. Nick Nuttall reports

Making the most of nature's gifts

Cars made from straw, aircraft parts from palm trees and biodegradable plastics from wood pulp and turnips are just some of the tantalising possibilities being examined by scientists returning to nature for clues to better materials of the future.

In 1982 the American journal *Science* suggested that mankind's over-dependence on the petroleum industry for consumer and building materials would be a passing fancy. Eight years later an increasing number of researchers in Europe, the United States and Japan are beginning to agree.

One of the centres pioneering work into plant fibres for high technology materials is the Biocomposites Centre at the University of Wales set up a year ago with Welsh Development Agency and industry backing.

Dr James Bolton, a wood physicist who heads the centre, says super-strong, super-light, plant-based materials offer enormous benefits over their man-made rivals. "On a strength-per-unit weight they are comparable and cost a third less than glass fibres, about a fifth of Kevlar and a third of carbon."

"They are from a renewable resource, which has implications in terms of burning fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions of carbon dioxide, and take far less energy to process when compared with glass fibres."

Plant-based materials, for use in everything from the automotive industry to marine engineering, are also highly recyclable. Glass

fibres reinforced products cannot be incinerated to make electricity because by-products clog up boilers. Plant reinforced materials have none of these drawbacks.

The advantages of wood, straw, flax and palm fibres have been suspected for some time but the drawbacks to using them commercially have been insuperable until now. The main problem has been that fibres attract water leading to enormous swelling, which shears composite materials apart.

An idea patented by the University of Wales promises to end this problem and to give plant-based materials unusual properties. Researchers are using a process that pulps the wood cheaply before modifying the fibres' chemical groups to repel water without destroying their ability to bind. The technique uses so-called di-functional reagents, which attach to the water-attracting hydroxyl groups. With these reagents, which give the scientists "total control over the surface chemistry", other interesting possibilities are emerging. Fire-retardant chemicals, which will never leak into the environment, can be attached.

The team has identified flax fibres as being the strongest, but this could be because their process extracts more complete flax fibres. Dr Bolton says that between 30 and 70 per cent of fibres are traditionally used in composites.

While manufacturers are discussing all-plastic cars made from composites, Dr Bolton believes "a large part, if not all, of a car could be made from plant fibre-reinforced materials".

At the University of Minnesota in the United States, another team is studying ways of turning the millions of tons of pulp waste burned every year into biodegrad-



All done: BA's new service checks in a passenger with high tech

Checking in at the airport may be a slightly shorter and less frustrating process from next week.

British Airways is equipping staff at check-in desks with hand-held computers linked to the central booking computer by radio. When queues build up an official will look for passengers with hand luggage only, check them in on the computer and give them a boarding card.

In this way, the queue is shortened for everybody and those who travel light do not have to wait behind the inevitable family that appears to be moving house.

Cabin staff will also have the hand-held terminals, enabling them to identify every passenger from the data loaded into them over the radio link. They will be able to put information about sales of duty-free goods on to the computers, and write their voyage reports, all being sent automatically to the main computer over the radio link and then by satellite, exploiting the Skyphone telephone radio service now under trial for British Airways.

High-flying ideas from BA

The British airline is using new computers to make life easier for its passengers

traveller, at an automatic machine similar to the ticket machines that have come into service on British Airways' Super Shuttle flights.

The booking operation would include pressing a thumb on to a pad, allowing the computer to scan the thumbprint and store the image. This image would stay with the database entry for that passenger, allowing instant identification at all points on a flight. The idea is not just a convenience for the airline, Mr Watson says, but will tighten security substantially.

Once a passenger has checked in, all the details will be sent from the central database, including the

passenger's requirements such as non-smoking accommodation, extra leg room, special dietary needs, any disabilities or medical conditions and even simple preferences for window or aisle seats.

Just as important as the airline's point of view, passengers will at this point have their bank or credit account debited.

But will the airlines use this system to carry less complimentary information about passengers? Will past incidents of drunken behaviour or smoking a pipe in the toilet, be recorded? Mr Watson says such information would be barred because all information would be open to the passenger concerned under the Data Protection Act.

"We will record positive information, things that you like, not things you did to us that we did not like," he says.

The cabin crews will be able to enter information on passengers into a computerised voyage report,

simply by dictating into the portable computer. Entering information needs to be as simple as possible to encourage staff to do it properly. At present voyage reports are written on paper, a system that does not encourage full reports or easy collation of the data afterwards.

Life while the airliner is in the air will also become more leisurely, Mr Watson says. British Airways is already testing television sets that fit in the backs of seats so that passengers can watch videos of their own choice.

In the future, passengers will be able to use the television sets to book hotels and hire cars at their destination, as well as confirming or changing travel arrangements. Catalogues on video disc will allow in-flight shopping, with goods awaiting passengers at their destination or posted back home. The data will be transmitted by satellite, as will all the usual communications now available only in offices on terra firma, such as telephone, telex and facsimile.

CHRIS PARTRIDGE

Court of Appeal

Official Solicitor's role in compensation

In re G (a Minor)
Before Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Butler-Sloss and Lord Justice Taylor
[Judgment June 14]

On an application for leave to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in respect of a claim made on behalf of a ward, the court should consider (a) whether the claim was arguable, and if it were (b) whether it would be in the ward's interests to pursue it.

It was, however, for the board not for the court, to evaluate the material on which the claim was based.

The Official Solicitor, who was an officer of the court frequently charged with the duty of acting as guardian *ad litem* in such cases, was in a special position. It would be rare for the court to find that such an application made by him were inappropriate for the grant of leave.

The Court of Appeal so stated allowed an appeal by the Official Solicitor, acting as guardian *ad litem* for the ward, from Mr Justice Rattee's refusal of

leave to apply to the board in respect of the ward's claim.

Mr Allan Levy, QC and Mr Richard H. Bond for the guardian *ad litem*; Mr Andrew Kirkwood, QC and Mrs Susan Matthews for the father.

LORD JUSTICE BUTLER-SLOSS referred to a finding made by Mr Justice Sheldon on the main hearing of the wardship application in 1987 that the conduct of the ward's father towards her at a time when she was in his care, although falling far short in respect of the standard of proof necessary in criminal proceedings, had nevertheless been over-familiar and sexually inappropriate amounting in its context to a sexual abuse (see [1987] 1 WLR 1461, 1469).

Her Ladyship said that the judge had confirmed the wardship but made an order continuing limited supervised access to the father. By 1989 it was thought that such access had become disadvantageous to the child and on an application to Mr Justice Rattee he ordered that it be terminated.

It was at the end of that hearing that the Official Solicitor

as guardian *ad litem*, had applied for leave to apply to the board on the basis of the facts found by Mr Justice Sheldon and it was for the board to see if the facts were sufficient to justify an *ex gratia* payment.

The claim to the board would be made by way of written application, with consideration on paper. It was unlikely to proceed to an oral hearing, but even if that were so, the child and her maternal family would not be involved.

With regard to the question of whether there had been a crime of violence, in her Ladyship's view, it was not for the judge hearing the application for leave to try the very issue which was the specific remit of the board.

The court was a filter and its approach was analogous to that adopted on applications for leave to apply for judicial review, namely "is the application hopeless or is it arguable?"

The approach was not: "Will it succeed?"

If it were hopeless or unarguable, it was for the court to say that it was not a proper case to

go forward. If it were arguable, then the court had to go on to consider whether it was in the child's interests for the claim to proceed.

Considering the factors in the instant case, her Ladyship concluded both that the claim was arguable and that it was in the interests of the child to continue. The judge had misdirected himself both in considering that the claim was not proper to go forward and in oversteering the adverse effect which it would have on the child.

Her Ladyship drew attention to the special situation of the Official Solicitor with regard to applications of the present type. He had great experience and was, in any event, an officer of the court. It could only rarely be necessary for the court to find such an application made by him was frivolous or inappropriate.

Her Ladyship would allow the appeal.

Lord Justice Taylor and the Master of the Rolls agreed.

Solicitors: Official Solicitor; Thomas Eggar Verrall Bowles, Horsham.

Law Report June 21 1990

Jail an appropriate sentence for assault on traffic wardens

Regina v Robertson
Before Lord Justice Russell, Mr Justice Owen and Mr Justice Mantell
[Judgment May 22]

Traffic wardens deserved the protection of the courts in carrying out their sometimes unpopular duties. Those who attacked them must expect to be visited with a sentence of imprisonment, to be brought into effect immediately.

The Court of Appeal so stated when allowing an appeal by George Trevor Robertson and reducing to three months a sentence of six months imprisonment imposed on April 25, 1990 by Judge Clarkson at

Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court on the appellant's conviction of an assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

Mr Richard Kingsley, appearing for the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant.

MR JUSTICE MANTELL, giving the judgment of the court, said that the appellant was convicted of striking a female traffic warden across the face with the back of his hand when she was attempting to place a parking ticket on his motor car, which he had parked illegally on double yellow lines.

When sentencing, the judge said that traffic wardens deserved the protection of the

courts from such behaviour. Their Lordships agreed.

It was becoming apparent that when in charge of motor cars many people behaved in a manner much more aggressively than would be normal to them. Those who attacked traffic wardens must expect an immediate custodial sentence.

However, notwithstanding the lack of mitigation which would have been available had the appellant pleaded guilty, the injury inflicted was not serious. What was necessary in the instant case was a taste of prison. A sentence of three months would have been sufficient for the purpose.

The claim was that in being sent to Gibraltar, the notice was not properly served because Parkstone had notified Gulf of a London address for service.

Concerning Parkstone's primary claim, his Lordship had come to the conclusion that Parkstone had not shown that it had a real prospect of succeeding at trial.

Turning to Parkstone's alternative claim for an injunction restraining Gulf from relying on its notice of February 16 as to unpaid calls on shares, which had been sent to Gibraltar and not to the London address, his Lordship said a question of construction arose on the regulations to do with notices in Table A of the Companies Act 1948.

Regulation 131 provided: "A notice may be given by the company to any member either personally or by sending it by post to that address, or by registered address, or (if he has no registered address within the United Kingdom) to the address, if any, within the United Kingdom supplied by him to the

Company law notice can be served by foreign post

Parkstone Ltd v Gulf Guarantee Bank plc
Before Mr Justice Warner
[Judgment May 16]

A notice served by a company pursuant to article 131 in Part I of Table A in the First Schedule to the Companies Act 1948 might, in the case of a member having a registered address outside the United Kingdom, be sent by post to the member at that address. The words "in the ordinary course of post" in article 131 were not confined to post within the United Kingdom.

Mr Justice Warner so held in the Chancery Division in refusing an application by the plaintiff, Parkstone Ltd, for an injunction to restrain the defendant, Gulf Guarantee Bank plc, from relying on its notice of shares held by the plaintiff, Parkstone Ltd, in Gulf.

Mr Robin Potts, QC and Mr Michael Todd for Parkstone; Mr Terence Eltherton, QC and Mr Charles Turnbull for Gulf.

MR JUSTICE WARNER said that in an action by Parkstone, a company incorporated in Gibraltar, relating to unpaid calls on partly paid shares in Gulf Guarantee Bank, an English company, an interlocutory application had earlier been granted restraining Gulf from relying on its notice of shares held by the plaintiff, Parkstone Ltd, in Gulf.

There was now before his Lordship an application for continuation of that injunction or, in the alternative, an injunction restraining Gulf until trial from relying on a notice dated February 16, 1990 sent to Parkstone in Gibraltar about the unpaid calls.

The claim was that in being sent to Gibraltar, the notice was not properly served because Parkstone had notified Gulf of a London address for service.

Concerning Parkstone's primary claim, his Lordship had come to the conclusion that Parkstone had not shown that it had a real prospect of succeeding at trial.

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Regulation 131 provided: "A notice may be given by the company to any member either personally or by sending it by post to that address, or by registered address, or (if he has no registered address within the United Kingdom) to the address, if any, within the United Kingdom supplied by him to the

company for the giving of notice to him.

"Where a notice is sent by post, service of the notice shall be deemed to be effected by properly addressing, prepaying and posting a letter containing the notice, and to have been effected in the case of a notice of a meeting at the expiration of 24 hours after the letter containing the same is posted, and in any other case at the time at which the letter would be delivered in the ordinary course of post."

Regulation 132 was about the way in which the company might give a notice to the joint holders of a share and regulation 133 was about the way in which it could give notice to the person entitled to a share in consequence of the death or bankruptcy of a member.

Regulation 134 provided that notice of every general meeting was to be given in any manner before authorised to "any member except those members whose names are registered in the company's register of members who have not supplied to the company an address within the United Kingdom for the giving of notices to them." After (b) and (c), the regulation concluded: "No other person shall be entitled to receive notices of general meetings."

Parkstone said that under regulation 131 it was not permissible for the company to serve a notice on a member whose registered address was outside the United Kingdom by sending it to him by post to that address.

If the member had supplied an address within the UK for the giving of notices to him, the notice might be sent to him by post to that address. Otherwise it had to be served personally in the case of a corporate member by leaving it at its registered address.

Mr Potts relied on two authorities which he submitted showed that "in the ordinary course of post" meant "in the ordinary course of UK post."

One was *In re The Union Hill Silver Co Ltd* (1870) 22 LT 400, where Vice-Chancellor Malins had construed the relevant provisions of the 1862 Act in the way he did because he said, to do otherwise would produce a most inconvenient result and would be opposed to the spirit and intention of the Act.

The other case was *In re Warden and Hotchkiss Ltd* (1945) Ch 270, where the relevant articles of association were in exactly the same terms as those in the 1862 Table A.

It was clear from the judgments of the Court of Appeal in that case that had the wording of the articles been materially different from the wording of those in the 1862 Table A, the result might have been otherwise.

In the 1948 Table A the particular inconvenience or

difficulty relating to the summoning of meetings that was the reason for Vice-Chancellor Malins' decision in the *Union Hill Silver Company* case, and which the Court of Appeal had had in mind in *In re Warden and Hotchkiss*, was overcome by regulation 134(a), so that there was no need to strain the meaning of regulation 131 in order to overcome it.

The phrase "in the ordinary course of post" in regulation 131 could be given its natural meaning. Such a phrase had to be interpreted in the light of the context in which it was used.

Neither of the two cases was authority for the proposition that the phrase "in the ordinary course of post" always meant in the ordinary course of UK post. They were authority only for the proposition that it did so mean in the context of the 1862 Table A and of articles in the same or similar terms.

On a straightforward reading of the first sentence of regulation 131 it afforded the company a choice of methods by which it might give notice to a member. In the case of any member it might give the notice to him either "personally" or "by sending it by post to him" or "by sending it by post to his registered address."

Supposedly, the second of those methods might be used where, for instance, the company knew that the member's true address differed from his registered address.

In the case of a member who had no registered address within the United Kingdom but who had supplied to the company an address within the UK for the giving of notices to him there was available to the company the additional method of sending the notice by post to the latter address.

Regulation 134(a) provided an incentive to such a member to supply an address in the United Kingdom for that purpose.

It was at least doubtful whether the concept of personal service was applicable in the case of service on a company in the absence of express provision as to how personal service should be effected.

His Lordship's conclusion was that Gulf's notice dated February 16, 1990 was effectively served on Parkstone.

Having reached that conclusion as a matter of construction of regulation 131, there was no need to express any opinion on a submission by counsel for Gulf, citing *Staple Shoes Ltd v Price Tailors Ltd* (1960) Ch 396, 403 that it was sufficient that the notice was in fact received by Parkstone, that fact making it immaterial by what means it reached Parkstone.

Accordingly, Parkstone's application would be dismissed.

Solicitors: Herbert Smith; Boodle Hatfield.

Successor in title can be person aggrieved

Times Investment Ltd v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another
Before Lord Justice Dillon, Lord Justice Stocker and Lord Justice Parker
[Judgment June 12]

A successor in title to land subject to a planning appeal could be a "person aggrieved" for the purposes of challenging the planning decision under section 245 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

The Court of Appeal so held in dismissing an appeal by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets from the judgment of Sir Frank Layfield, QC, who, sitting as a deputy High Court judge in October 1989, had held that the court had power to entertain the application of Times Investment Ltd, recent purchaser of a property at Elder Street, Stepney, London.

In 1988 the previous owner of the property obtained planning permission, subject to restrictive conditions, for devolvement. It appealed under section 36 of the 1971 Act and in a decision letter in April 1989 the Secretary of State for the Environment and another, the appellant, continued to bind the applicant, or any subsequent owner, the applicant was to be regarded as a person aggrieved for the purposes of section 245.

Lord Justice Stocker and Lord Justice Parker agreed.

Solicitors: Mr Peter North, Bethnal Green; Isaac & Co.

section 36 of the Act against a refusal of planning permission, was not a person aggrieved within the meaning of section 245(1) of the Act and thus had no *locus standi* to institute the proceedings.

Section 245 of the 1971 Act provides: "(1) If any person... (b) is aggrieved by any action on the part of the Secretary of State to which this section applies and desires to question the validity of that action... he may... make an application to the High Court under this section."

Mr Barry Payton for Tower Hamlets; Mr John Male for the appellant; the Secretary of State did not appear and was not represented.

LORD JUSTICE DILLON said that in *Turner v Secretary of State for the Environment* (1974) 28 P & CR 123 Mr Justice Ackner decided that the words "person aggrieved" should not be restrictively construed: they applied, he said, to "any person who, in the ordinary sense of the word, is aggrieved by the decision."

As the applicant had acquired the property and as any conditions imposed by the inspector in his decision... later continued to bind the applicant, or any subsequent owner, the applicant was to be regarded as a person aggrieved for the purposes of section 245.

Lord Justice Stocker and Lord Justice Parker agreed.

Solicitors: Mr Peter North, Bethnal Green; Isaac & Co.

Concurrent sentence on unrelated offence was incorrect

Attorney-General's Reference (No 1 of 1990)

Where a sentence of imprisonment was imposed on an offender convicted of an offence, which was in no way part or parcel of other offences of which he was convicted, it was technically incorrect to make that sentence concurrent with the prison sentences imposed for the other offences.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Lane, Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Boreham and Mr Justice Jowitt) so stated on May 11 when considering a reference under section 36 of the Criminal

Justice Act 1988 by the Attorney-General in respect of a sentence which he regarded as unduly lenient.

On January 29, 1990 at Liverpool Crown Court, John Cameron Atkinson, after pleading guilty, was sentenced by Judge Arthur to two years imprisonment on three counts of indecent assault of a male person, six months for taking an indecent photograph of a child, and six months for doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of justice (count 9), making a total of two years imprisonment concurrent.

The Court of Appeal in-

creased the sentence on count 9 to 12 months and ordered it to run consecutively, making a total of three years.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE said that this was a bad case of attempting to pervert the course of justice and 12 months was the minimum appropriate sentence in the circumstances. If that was made to run consecutively, the resulting total of three years was not excessive.

Not without hesitation their Lordships had concluded that the sentence imposed by the judge was sufficiently out of line with what would properly have been imposed that they ought to intervene.

The Times on the World Cup challenges facing England and the Republic of Ireland

Riot police control warring supporters

FROM JOHN GOODBODY IN CAGLIARI

THE sporadic violence on the streets of Sicily resumed again yesterday when 25 English supporters fought up to 500 Italians in the northern port of Olbia.

Riot police were forced to fire warning shots over the heads of the two factions, and 22 Englishmen, some of whom had been drinking heavily, and one Sard were detained. Shop windows were smashed and cars damaged.

"It was a battle, even war," a police spokesman in Olbia said yesterday. The trouble began when hundreds of local youths gathered to celebrate Italy's victory over Czechoslovakia.

The Italians began jeering and insulting the visiting English and then bottles and stones were thrown. A series of running fights then took place. When the police intervened an officer sustained serious head injuries.

Another police spokesman said: "We were able to catch the English but most of the Sards escaped."

The incident was an unhappy prelude to England's final qualifying match against Egypt here tonight. The march to the stadium, which led to the problems on Saturday, has been banned because no permit has been obtained.

Four of the six people held after the violence last Saturday have been released without being charged. A fifth, Neil Egerton, from Liverpool, leaves hospital tomorrow with a broken leg and the sixth, Mark Chapman from Harnet Hempstead, has been given a six-month suspended sentence and expelled.

Despite these incidents, the level of football here has been unexceptional. The British government is relieved that so far the number of detentions (151) has been comparatively small given the fact that there were more than 3,000 supporters, mostly young men, staying on the island for a fortnight. Yet the government is still wary about the match against Egypt and particularly if England play on the mainland.

Because of the housing problems in Cagliari itself, the supporters have been dispersed around the island, usually travelling to the capital only for the games. Most of the small incidents, such as those at Olbia, have flared up in towns and villages around the island.

Hooliganism tends to be at its most virulent when large groups gather together and this has only happened on match days. Indeed with the games ending at 10.45pm many supporters have had to travel for several hours to their housing and since the bars have been closed there has been little incentive to stay in Cagliari.

On the mainland, things may be different. Crowds, for instance, would be much larger and housing much easier to find close to the city centre. Police forces would also have only a few days to prepare rather than six months as has been the case here. The police in Cagliari have not been taken unawares as occurred in Milan when a large group of West Germans went on the rampage.

John Williams, a sociologist at Leicester University and author of *Hooligans Abroad*, has pointed out that the police here have had a much higher profile than at the 1988 European championship with at least one police officer deployed in the front line rather than held in reserve as occurred in West Germany. "The situation is over-determined by the requirements of law and order—who rules the street, that is part of the crisis."

The crisis is one for sport and English football in particular. A reputation of the widespread violence involving English supporters such as occurred in Luxembourg in 1977 and Bonn 1981, can be contained only by intense policing.

Similarly, the situation in England itself is contained only by employing 7,000 officers every Saturday to allow the League programme to continue moderately peacefully at a cost, largely borne by the public, of about £40 million.

The matches in Cagliari have taken place in a state at arm's length with up to 7,000 officers on duty. Everyone entering the stadium has been searched three times. Even plastic bottles, which might be used as missiles, have been confiscated.

Matches not involving England have taken place in a different atmosphere, the feeling that sport is taking place. Williams said: "Here in Cagliari there has been an eerie silence approaching the ground."

The body of football may have been saved by the necessary policing but the soul has been killed.

Veil of secrecy betrays Robson

FROM STUART JONES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT, CAGLIARI

ENGLAND will walk along a familiar cliff tonight. As in the World Cup four years ago, they need to win their closing first-round fixture to be sure of staying in the competition, and in all probability they must do so again without Bryan Robson, and with an injured Lineker.

The aim, to beat Egypt in the Stadio Sant'Elia, is clear enough, but the prospects are otherwise deliberately clouded in confusion. Never before during his eight years as the national manager has Bobby Robson hidden his plans so meticulously and so thoroughly. His team is known only by his squad.

After information about his use of the sweepers system was leaked last week, he has sworn his players to secrecy. "Let's see how long they can keep it," he said yesterday during a press conference which may be the last he holds before an international match. No one would have known he faces such a dramatic farewell.

Relaxed and co-operative, he was more jovial than at any time during the last month. Asked how he felt about a defeat as humiliating as that in 1950, when they lost 1-0 to the United States, he merely smiled and replied: "Thanks for pointing that out."

Lines of concern, though, creased the genial facade. The comment indicated that there are tiny cracks in his belief that his team will tomorrow be preparing for a journey to the Italian mainland rather than home. "There will be no lack of heart but, I tell you, I wish the skipper was there," he said.

There are misgivings, too, about the physical state of his only reliable goalkeeper. The bed of Lineker's big toenail is infected, and he could not even wear a boot during training yesterday. He may require an injection to ease the pain, and a late fitness test to reassure Bobby Robson.

Hodge, the victim of a pulled hamstring, has been ruled out, but there are so many possible permutations that almost everybody else in the party is in contention for a place. Conversations here confirm that England have, overnight, changed from being a predictable stereotype to a refreshingly flexible unit.

In writing one team sheet, for the tie against The Netherlands, Bobby Robson ridiculed suggestions that he was tactically rigid, and his players went on to prove that they could adapt. The plan was courageous and merited a greater reward. Will he now be brave enough to persist with it?

He should. With Wright as a sweeper, the defence is stronger and the distribution from the back is more precise. The full backs, who are generally more comfortable when going forward, are released, and the midfield is consequently more solid. Above all, Barnes and Waddle can be accommodated as more than luxuries.

Hosts look to Schillaci to solve problem

SALVATORE Schillaci's goal for Saturday against Czechoslovakia on Tuesday lifted him out of a ruck of 42 players with a goal apiece and gave the hosts hope they might have found the goalscorer they so badly need.

The matches in Cagliari have taken place in a state at arm's length with up to 7,000 officers on duty. Everyone entering the stadium has been searched three times. Even plastic bottles, which might be used as missiles, have been confiscated.

Matches not involving England have taken place in a different atmosphere, the feeling that sport is taking place. Williams said: "Here in Cagliari there has been an eerie silence approaching the ground."

The body of football may have been saved by the necessary policing but the soul has been killed.

The body of football may have been saved by the necessary policing but the soul has been killed.



The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. Rather than being negative, the system is more positive than the traditional domestic flat back four. When the full backs advance, the attack involves seven men instead of six. When the full backs retreat, the defence features five instead of four.

Apart from the numerical evidence, England, if they do earn the right to take on the best sides in the world, would benefit from re-acquainting themselves to the formation. Moreover, all of the players trust it and prefer it. There can be no case for rejecting the idea and returning to old, familiar ways.

Nevertheless, there is no need to rely on aerial power at the back, since the Egyptians strike almost exclusively on the ground, and at speed. Parker, who could counter such a threat, should replace Butcher as Walker's partner, and Stevens should be recalled to his usual position at right back.

Steven and Dorogi would be more creative alternatives on the flanks, but it might be too risky to bring them in from the cold and throw them into the hottest of nights. The most likely change is that McMahon, rather than the less secure Platt, will act as the understudy for Bryan Robson.

There is no urgent need to alter a strike force which penetrated the Dutch on a handful of occasions. It was illuminated by Gascoigne, and his contribution should spur Barnes and Waddle, who have yet to fulfil their potential after more than 100 appearances between them.

Implicitly, Bobby Robson has said in his mind when he said: "Some have threatened to be world-class players. It is about time they delivered." If not, England, like the Republic of Ireland and The Netherlands before them, could be drawn into an irritatingly frustrating deadlock.

"If we get in front," Bobby Robson said, "we will be OK." Lineker, who has scored seven of England's eight World Cup goals here and in Mexico, is the obvious candidate to achieve that objective. Egypt should beware. The last time he led the attack with a poisoned toe he scored twice against Poland, and ushered the side into the last 16 in 1986.

Probable teams:
ENGLAND (4-4-2): 1 P. Shearer (Derby County); 2 D. Wright (Nottingham Forest); 3 M. Platt (Derby County); 4 P. Parker (Derby County); 5 P. Parker (Derby County); 6 P. Parker (Derby County); 7 P. Parker (Derby County); 8 P. Parker (Derby County); 9 P. Parker (Derby County); 10 P. Parker (Derby County); 11 P. Parker (Derby County); 12 P. Parker (Derby County); 13 P. Parker (Derby County); 14 P. Parker (Derby County); 15 P. Parker (Derby County); 16 P. Parker (Derby County); 17 P. Parker (Derby County); 18 P. Parker (Derby County); 19 P. Parker (Derby County); 20 P. Parker (Derby County); 21 P. Parker (Derby County); 22 P. Parker (Derby County); 23 P. Parker (Derby County); 24 P. Parker (Derby County); 25 P. Parker (Derby County); 26 P. Parker (Derby County); 27 P. Parker (Derby County); 28 P. Parker (Derby County); 29 P. Parker (Derby County); 30 P. Parker (Derby County); 31 P. Parker (Derby County); 32 P. Parker (Derby County); 33 P. Parker (Derby County); 34 P. 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